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The Literary Profession in the Elizabethan Age

BY

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To
Professor C. B. Firth

PREFACE.

THE writer of the following brief sketch is conscious that it only partly fulfils the promise of its title, which has been selected chiefly for the sake of brevity. This little book is, in fact, only a series of studies upon certain aspects of the whole question of authorship and the conditions amid which it was pursued as a profession during the period denoted. No attempt has been made to deal with learned and controversial writings. The enquiry is confined to what may perhaps be styled, for want of a good English word, "*belles-lettres*,"—to the "*literature of power*," as distinguished from the "*literature of knowledge*." It includes poetry, story-telling, pamphlets on social topics, and drama. The last has been treated very briefly, because it has already received ample investigation from more competent writers.

The period chosen for review has also had to be strictly limited. It dates from the accession of Elizabeth to a few years after the accession of Charles I. It has been selected as being a period of comparative internal quiet, preceded and followed by times of serious disturbance,—a period therefore fairly favourable for a study of the natural development of the profession of literature.

The writer gladly takes this opportunity of offering her thanks to the Council of Somerville College, Oxford, whose generous grant of a "*Sabbatical*" year's leave of absence, during her tenure of the Tutorship in English Literature there, made it possible to carry nearly to completion a scheme long cherished. Sincerest thanks are also due to Mr. A. W. Pollard, for generous

encouragement and help afforded to the writer,—a chance reader in the British Museum Library. To Professor C. H. Herford, her earliest literary guide, she gratefully acknowledges a long-standing indebtedness.

The dedication of this small volume to Professor C. H. Firth is an inadequate attempt to give expression to the gratitude due to him. During the whole course of its preparation he has allowed his valuable time and his intimate knowledge of the subject to be drawn upon without stint.

Several of the following chapters first appeared in the pages of "The Library," and the writer desires to thank the Editors for their kind permission to republish them.

The first five chapters of this book, forming a thesis upon "Economic Aspects of the Life of the Professional Writer under Elizabeth and James I," were presented by the author in support of her candidature for the degree of Doctor of Literature in the University of London.

PH. SHEAVYN.

MANCHESTER,
October, 1909.

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Stimulus afforded to literary creations—(1) by love of unknown and marvellous; often in the form of superstition; (2) by love of the beautiful—often superficial and artificial, and mingling with coarseness; (3) by admiration for vigour and greatness, sometimes confounded with violence and cruelty.

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D.N.B. - - - - "Dictionary of National Biography."
Hist. MSS. Comm. Historical Manuscripts Commission.

INTRODUCTION.

"Every man that writes in verse is not a poet
they are poets that live by it, the poor fellows that live by
it."
—JONSON, *Epicæne*, II, ii.

"When I doe playe my prize in print, I'le be paid for
my paines, that's once."
—NASH. "Have with you to Saffron Walden."
Works, ed. Grosart, vol. iii, p. 189.

IN the following pages an attempt is made to describe, from evidence afforded by contemporary writers, some of the conditions amid which the profession of letters was pursued during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I.¹ The subject is one of considerable interest, both historical and literary; and the evidence to be obtained is more abundant than might at first sight be supposed. The Elizabethan writer is above all things outspoken and impulsive, even childishl naïve in self-exposure; and for our purposes, these characteristics are invaluable. As he remonstrates with his publisher, grumbles at his patron, and apologises to his readers, he lets us into the secret of many things that would otherwise remain unknown or unintelligible. But his revelations must be interpreted, if their bearing is to be accurately estimated, in the light of modern researches into the economic and social history of the age. The Elizabethan writer was no shrewder than most of us in apprehending the causes of social weal or woe. It needs the impartial judgment and fuller knowledge possible only to posterity, to understand and trace to their origin the special conditions which environed an author in that epoch.

1. See prefatory note, on the limitations of the treatment here presented.

In the study of Elizabethan and Jacobean society, in whatever sphere, certain ascertained facts of social and economic history must be steadily kept in view. Since the accession of the Tudor dynasty, the influence and prestige of the older nobility, and indeed of the aristocracy as a class, had considerably waned. The policy of the Tudors had aimed consistently at depressing the old baronial families, and at substituting an aristocracy which should be subservient to the Crown. In the reign of Elizabeth, accordingly, most of the leading members of the aristocracy belonged to houses ennobled under the Tudors, and deriving their influence less from territorial possessions and jurisdiction than from their wealth and their relations with the crown.

Moreover, the merchant class, the lawyers, and the yeomen, were steadily growing in wealth and power throughout the whole of Elizabeth's reign. In particular, merchant adventurers and lawyers accumulated large fortunes. James Howell was of opinion that the twenty-four London Aldermen could buy up a hundred of the richest men in Amsterdam.¹ Harrison knew a shipowner possessing sixteen or seventeen ships worth £1000 each,² exclusive of cargo.³ By means of their riches such men were enabled to associate with the lower aristocracy, which was, indeed, constantly recruited from their ranks. When, moreover, James I. began to sell baronetcies and peerages, the distinction between rank and mere wealth became still less evident. The effect of this social revolution, in its influence upon the question of literary patronage, will be considered later on.

1. "Epistolæ Ho-Eliañæ," 1 May, 1619.

2. Equivalent to about £5,000 in present money. For the purpose of the present discussion the value of Elizabethan coinage, in purchasing power, has been estimated at five times that of the present day. The average cost of a meal at a respectable tavern was sixpence (Hist. MSS. Comm. v, Pt. I.; MSS. of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis, p. 578). Admission to theatres was from one penny to half-a-crown. J. Bass Mullinger also accepts this estimate.

3. Harrison. "Description of England," 1577. New Shaks. Soc., p. 291.

A natural consequence of the change was that men began to attach to riches an importance vastly greater than before. The commercial desire for gain spread rapidly; all classes entered into the race for wealth. Further, the existence of a number of opulent men, the merchant capitalists, tended to raise the general standard of comfort, and to encourage a spirit of luxury and display. Harrison bears reluctant witness to the luxuriousness prevalent in his day; extravagance in food, in dress, and in furniture, he says, marks all English life. John Chamberlain tells a characteristic bit of gossip concerning a bankrupt London tradesman: when the inventory of his belongings was taken, thirty of his wife's smocks were valued at three-score pounds!¹ Stubbes asserts that whereas, in his father's day, one or two dishes of good wholesome meat were thought "sufficient for a man of great worship to dine withal," it was, in his own time, thought necessary to have the table "covered from one end to the other, as thick as one dish can stand by another."² Many country gentlemen, unable to bear the increasing expense of housekeeping, gave up their establishments, and went to follow the Court, with one man and a lackey for retinue.

Meanwhile, prices were rising rapidly, owing partly to increased consumption, partly to the influx of silver from the West. In the latter half of the sixteenth century, corn cost from three to ten times the average price of the previous three centuries.³ Sugar rose from fourpence to half-a-crown.⁴ Stowe tells us that not only corn "but

1. Chamberlain. "Letters," 15 October, 1602. Camden Soc., Vol. 79 (Old Series), 1861. This sum must be multiplied by five to arrive at the present-day value.

2. Stubbes. "Anatomy of Abuses," 1583. New Shaks. Soc. 1877-82, pp. 102-3. It should be observed that in these and the following pages free use has been made of the testimony of such writers as Philip Stubbes and Stephen Gosson—men whose impartiality can perhaps be called into question. But their evidence is usually corroborated, and it seems sufficient to call attention, once for all, to their liability to prejudice, in this footnote.

3. Thorold Rogers. "Six Centuries of Work and Wages," p. 388.

4. Harrison. "Description of England," I, p. 131.

all things else, whatever was sustenance for man, was likewise raised without all conscience or reason.”¹ Rents increased exorbitantly during the same period. A farm which in the earlier part of the century let for ten shillings, would fetch in 1583 as much as ten pounds.²

This “dearth” (*i.e.*, dearness) of the necessities of life is a frequent topic with Elizabethan writers on social questions. They are puzzled to account for it in the face of the evident prosperity of the nation, failing to realise that it was, in some sort, in itself evidence of prosperity.

On the other hand, money incomes had not risen in proportion to the increased scale of expenditure. Dr. Cunningham points out that certain classes, “those with relatively fixed incomes, including wage-earners,” suffered severely,—this in spite of the fact that wages rose.³ In 1581 artificers had to pay their journeymen twopence a day more than formerly, and yet the latter found it impossible to live on their wages.⁴ It has been reckoned that a man could earn by a whole year’s work in 1593, no more food and maintenance than he could have earned a century earlier by the labour of fifteen weeks.⁵ The lessened value of a money income is strikingly illustrated by the following contemporary statement:—

“In times past, and within the memory of man, he hath been accounted a rich and wealthy man, and well able to keep house among his neighbours, which, all things discharged, was clearly worth £30 or £40, —but in these our days the man of that estimation is so far, in the common opinion, from a good housekeeper or man of wealth, that he is reputed the next neighbour to a beggar.”⁶

1. Stowe. “Annals,” ed. 1605. See under year 1595 (page 1279).

2. Stubbes. “Anatomy,” p. 29–30.

3. W. Cunningham. “Growth of British Industry,” p. 169–70.

4. W. S(tafford). “A Compendious Examination.” (1581). New Shaks. Soc., 1876, p. 16.

5. Thorold Rogers. “Six Centuries of Work and Wages” (1884), Vol. ii, p. 391.

6. W. S(tafford). “Compendious or briefe Examination.” (1581). New Shaks. Soc., 1876, p. 82.

The prosperous were those who sold the products most in demand, viz., material necessities and luxuries. The seller of labour, the smaller gentry, and the professional man, of more or less fixed income, felt keenly the pinch of high prices. As to the literary man, he was, except in so far as he was maintained by patronage, in the economic position of an ordinary wage-earner. He offered for sale a commodity not too greatly in demand, and even—as was also to some extent the case with manual labour—artificially cheapened by legislation. It has, it is true, been questioned whether there existed, in Elizabethan times, a class of men who can fairly be called “professional” authors. But if we take the expression to mean, men who reckoned upon gaining a livelihood by selling their writings (or presenting them to rich men for the sake of a pecuniary return), it will, I think, become evident that such men existed, and in no very small number. Nash was at any rate a professional writer in this sense, for Harvey says of him, “No lesse than London would serve him, where somewhat recovered of his wits, by the excrements thereof (for the space of nine or ten years) he hath got his belly fed, and his back clothed. . . . He hath troubled the Presse all this time, and published sundrie works and volumes.”¹

See also the description of the poor University man in the “Returne from Parnassus.” “I want shiftes of shirtes, bandes, and all things els; yet I remaine thrise humbly and most affectionatelie bound to the right honourable printing house for my poore shiftes of apparell.”²

These men were invariably poor, and this in a society tending more and more to measure men by financial standards. Their earnings by authorship assumed frequently the unsatisfactory form of doles from so-called patrons, in return for the “gift” of a book; but in one

1. Harvey. “Trimming of Thomas Nashe.” Works ed. Grosart, Vol. iii, p. 68.

2. “Parnassus Plays” (1597–1601), ed. Macray (1886), p. 80.

way or another, they relied upon writing, not very successfully, to provide them with a livelihood.

In all ages, the pursuit of literature has been doubtfully remunerative; it was not otherwise in this great poetic age. "Poetry in this latter age," says Jonson, "hath proved but a mean mistress to such as have wholly addicted themselves to her, or given their names up to her family. Those who have but saluted her on the way, and now and then tendered their visits, she hath done much for, and advanced in the way of their own professions (both the law and the gospel) beyond all they could have hoped or done for themselves without her favour."¹ Yet Jonson, as a professional writer, fared remarkably well; the majority of his fellows could have uttered—as most of them did utter—far more touching complaints of their mistress.

Let scholars be as thrifty as they may
They will be poor ere their last dying day.
Learning and poverty will ever kiss.²

The truth of this may be demonstrated by the experience of almost every professional writer of this time. John Foxe, writer of the well-known "Book of Martyrs," is said to have been found in St. Paul's Churchyard half dead from starvation; Michael Drayton is said to have possessed just £5 at his death; Hooker's children were "beggars"; Thomas Wilson said "it were better to be a carter than a scholar, for worldly profit";³ Nash, Dekker, and many others, suffered imprisonment as debtors.

The attitude of ordinary men towards literature was, as will be seen later, largely one of self-deception. They believed themselves to have literary tastes; they certainly read considerably, and they talked a great deal about poetry. But their taste was far from cultivated; their

1. "Discoveries." *Works*, ed. Gifford, 1816, Vol. ix, p. 174.

2. "Pilgrimage to Parnassus" (1597). Ed. Macray, 1886, p. 3.

3. "Arte of Rhetorique." Ed. 1560, Prol.

methods of criticism were barbarously elementary, and their criteria crude. Moreover, with a few noble, intelligent exceptions, they despised their own contemporary writers. Thus it would appear that the immense output of literary work during the Elizabethan age was fostered very little by any enlightened encouragement; it was, in fact, produced in the face of most serious and disheartening hindrances. Only an exceptionally robust literary class could have withstood the withering effects of poverty, official interference, unfair competition, and scorn, with which they had to contend. It was the Elizabethan writer's vigorous vitality alone which overcame all obstacles, just as it still gives to his work its main value. • Tasteless, formless, crudely barbaric or childishly elaborate though much of it may be, it arose out of the spirit of unconquerable endeavour which was the supreme gift of the age to its men of genius, and the stamp of greatness is upon it.

The succeeding pages of this book are devoted to an attempt to elucidate some of the conditions,—economic, legal, and social,—which assisted, lured or hampered the professional author. It will be seen that discouragements far outweighed rewards; but they put the writer's mettle to the proof, and fostered in him the strenuousness which gives life.

CHAPTER I.

AUTHORS AND PATRONS.

. . Grand Mæcenas casts a glavering eye
 On the colde present of a poesie;
 And least he might more frankly take than give
 Gropes for a French crown in his emptie sleeve.

—HALL, "Virgid. VI Libri," Book V, 81-4.

The priest unpaide can neither sing nor say,
 Nor poets sweetlie write excepte they meete
 With sounde rewarde, for sermoning so sweete.

—LODGE, "A Fig for Momus," Eclogue III.

THE prevalence of a system of private literary patronage has usually coincided with the existence of a despotic or at least highly aristocratic and oligarchical form of society. In such a society alone is the bounty of individual benefactors a necessity. In a community where power and wealth are widely distributed, and literary culture within general reach, there are contrived, almost inevitably, means of rewarding genius, based upon the fact of its ability to appeal to large classes of men. Thus Thucydides, to whom the general vote of the Athenian citizens decreed at one time a public gift of £2,400, could afford to be independent of individual benefactors. A more commercial age such as our own makes even its works of genius articles of merchandise, and substitutes for a gratuitous reward the market value of an edition.

On the other hand, among such conditions as prevailed at Alexandria under the early Ptolemys, in Rome

under Augustus, and in the Italy of the despots, the patron of literature is a necessity. There we find a comparatively small, wealthy, cultured society, under the leadership of men to whom the gratification of literary tastes is a luxury for which they are willing to pay with munificence. And it must be confessed that in such a society literary genius has flourished at least as well as in communities of less concentrated culture. The list of writers who profited by the enlightened liberality of such patrons as Ptolemy, Augustus, Maecenas, Messala, Lorenzo de' Medici, Alfonso of Naples, and Pope Nicholas, includes some of the most renowned names in literature.

In England the circle of cultivated aristocrats has at all times been far smaller than in Renaissance Italy, nor have we ever been ruled by a monarch who could compare in taste and liberality with the great Italian humanist princes. But the Teutonic custom of befriending and honouring genius in the person of the scôp was handed down to later times by rulers such as Alfred and Henry Beauclerc; and this was, in the fourteenth century, reinforced by the example of Italy, though the practice was confined, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, to the monarch, the royal family, and some of the greater ecclesiastical dignitaries. In the latter part of the sixteenth century, influenced again, no doubt, by the example of Italy, we find a fairly general recognition, on the part of the nobility, of their obligations as patrons of literature. But the conditions of society differed widely from those of England of the fourteenth century or Italy of the fifteenth. New commercial ideals, more widespread education, and the rise of a public, if not literary, at least interested in reading, all tended to disturb the relation between patron and man of letters hitherto accepted as natural. The reigns of Elizabeth and James mark a gradual disintegration of the aristocratic system of private literary patronage, and the beginnings of economic independence

on the part of the writer. Like all economic transitions, this was attended with very painful experiences for those concerned—both patrons and protégés. Neither side realized the drift of circumstances, and efforts were aimed at the conservation of a dying system, which, rightly directed, might have facilitated the introduction of the new. We shall find that, all through the Elizabethan period, patronage was regarded as the one goal for the writer even by men who were actually subsisting,—for the most part very wretchedly,—on the sale of pamphlets and dramas to book publishers; it was hoped for, struggled after all the more feverishly, because of a growing sense of its precariousness.

Moreover, apart from the influence of tradition, it was inevitable that literary production, so far as it existed, should still subsist to some extent upon patronage. Books were only just beginning to be recognized in the world of trade, and, in that age, all that fell outside the sphere of buying and selling at recognized prices was matter of patronage. Patronage ruled in every walk of life. The halls of great men, the court-yards of country gentlemen, the antechambers of the court, were thronged with suitors,¹ pleading for every conceivable kind of gift, from the office of Groom of the Chamber to Her Majesty to the honourable employment of turnspit in a country kitchen. The elaborate mechanism of Civil Service Examinations, promotion by seniority, and registration, which now shields greatness from the importunate was only to be evolved three centuries later, and the poet who wanted a sinecure or a dedication fee had to urge his claims personally amidst a crowd of rival applicants. No party government stood in need of his services, as in the time of the more fortunate Addison; no host of periodicals opened their pages to his facile productions, as now; he must gain a patron or half starve. Not a single writer who persevered in his vocation was free

1. G. Goodman. "Court of James I." (ed. 1839), i, 320.

from obligations to patrons. Again and again they tell us that patronage alone can save, or has saved them from sheer want. Massinger declares that he could not have subsisted without the support of his patrons;¹ Nash openly entreats that some one will find him meat and maintenance, that he may "play the paper stainer";² Lodge depicts a recognized type in his portrait of the unfortunate poet driven by lack of patronage to forsake poetry for the plough.³

The old form of patronage, as experienced by Chaucer and Gower, had been a substantial and satisfactory thing. It provided a sufficient income and permanent connection with an exalted family, ensuring protection and affording prestige. It demanded in return the production of literary works of interest and artistic value, with, possibly, the performance of some more or less routine or occasional duties, not infrequently delegated. The writer himself was an honoured servant, regarded as reflecting glory upon his patron, and providing for him the highest form of refined pleasure. If the poet ever had to ask, he asked as one possessing a claim; if he suffered vicissitudes, it was that he shared those of his patron.

Times had changed, however, as even Skelton had had to realize, half a century earlier. In Elizabethan days it is rare to find the tie between patron and protégé so close and permanent. The names of those writers who were so fortunate as to meet with lifelong patronage are few indeed: Ascham, Daniel, Jonson—it is doubtful whether another could be found. Even in the case of these favoured three there are signs enough that their needs were but inadequately met. Ascham, in a suit to the queen the year before his death, asks no more than to be enabled to leave £20 a year to each of his two sons,

1. "Maid of Honour" (pr. 1632), Ded.

2. "Have with you to Saffron Walden." "Works" (ed. Grosart), iii, 42.

3. "Fig for Momus," Ecl. iii. (1595).

"Which," he declares, "will satisfy my desire, although as small a portion as ever secretary to a prince left behind him."¹ Jonson was driven more than once to sell part of his library, and grieved that his fortune humbled him to accept even the smallest courtesies with gratitude.² By far the most fortunate seems to have been Samuel Daniel. He finds no more serious complaint to make than that, being employed as a tutor, he is "constrained to live with *children*," when he should be writing "the actions of *men*."³

The most enlightened and generous patrons of literature known to us were various noble men and women who group themselves around the central figure of Sir Philip Sidney. Though a poor man, Sidney was a devoted lover of the beautiful, and a true friend to the literary artist. Men of letters had special reason to share the almost idolatrous feeling with which he was regarded by his contemporaries. He is honoured with gratitude by nearly every writer of the times, and held up to public view as the ideal patron. Nash gave utterance to the general sentiment when he penned the following lament :

"Gentle Sir Philip Sidney, thou knewest what belonged to a Scholler, thou knewest what paines, what toile, what travell, conduct to perfection : wel couldst thou give every virtue his encouragement, every Art his due, every writer his desert, cause none more virtuous, witty, or learned than thyselfe. But thou art dead in thy grave, and hast left too few successors of thy glory, too few to cherish the sonn of the muses, or water those budding hopes with their plentie, which thy bountie erst planted."⁴

Philip's sister Mary, the wife of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, shared his tastes, and continued, as

1. "Cal. State Papers," Dom. Add., p. 41. Oct. 10, 1567.

2. "To Sackville." "Underwoods." Works, ed. Gifford (1816), Vol. viii, p. 359.

3. From a letter to Lord Keeper Egerton, prefixed to a presentation folio of Daniel's works, 1601. See Grosart's ed., i, 10.

4. "Piers Penilesse" (1592). Works, ed. Grosart, ii, 12.

far as possible, the patronage of his many literary protégés after his early death. Spenser dedicated to her one of the sonnets prefixed to his "Faery Queen"; Breton expresses passionate devotion to her for having succoured him when in distress;¹ Daniel acknowledges that she "first encouraged and framed" him to the service of the Muses,² and urged him to the choice of higher themes; Abraham Fraunce wrote two poems for her;³ Nash praises her without stint.⁴ She was evidently, like her brother, a genuine friend to literary art.

Mary Sidney's son, William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, inherited the tastes of his mother and uncle. He was educated in the love of poetry by his mother's wise choice of Samuel Daniel as his tutor; and many literary men later on owed him gratitude for kindnesses. The poet William Browne lived with him at Wilton; he befriended his neighbour and relative George Herbert, and the dramatist Massinger; John Florio was "under heavy obligations to him"; Davison, Chapman, Breton, and John Taylor dedicated works to him; Donne was his intimate friend. But the most interesting fact in connection with him is his relation to Shakspeare. To him and his brother Philip was dedicated the famous First Folio of 1623, and he is stated by the editors to have "prosecuted both them (*i.e.*, the works) and their author with much favour." On this statement has been based a further conjecture that this same William Herbert is the celebrated "Mr. W. H." to whom the Sonnets were dedicated—a conjecture not yet completely abandoned. Pembroke was of a most generous and attractive nature, like his uncle, as is shown by the following passage in a contemporary private letter: "My Lord of Pembroke did a most noble act, like himself; for the king having given him all Sir

1. "Pilgrimage to Paradise," 1592 Dedn.

2. "Defence of Rime," 1607. Ded. to Earl of Pembroke.

3. The Countess of Pembroke's "Ivychurch" and "Emanuel."

4. Preface to "Astrophel and Stella" (1591).

Gervase Elwaies estate, which came to above £1,000 per annum, he freely bestowed it on the widow and her children.”¹ Every New Year’s Day the Earl used to send Ben Jonson £25 to buy books.²

Elizabeth, Countess of Rutland, Sidney’s daughter, does not seem to have inherited much of his interest in literature. At any rate, though she befriended Jonson, he does not appear enthusiastic about her as a patroness of the arts. He makes appeal to her noble father’s memory to stimulate her zeal for letters, reminding her that it would be a sin against her “great father’s spirit” did she not inherit his love unto the Muses.³

Sidney’s uncle, the famous Earl of Leicester, was a generous patron of scholars—though preferring those of learned rather than of artistic bent, and especially favouring Puritanical writers.⁴ He was friendly to Roger Ascham, whose son Dudley was his godson; and we are told that many persons were enabled by his generosity to pursue their studies. Works were dedicated to him by Greene, Florio, Edward Hake, and Spenser.⁵ A particular interest, that of mystery, attaches to Leicester’s relations with Spenser, as hinted at in the enigmatic dedication of the translation of “Virgil’s Gnat” to the great nobleman. The little gnat, eager to save the life of a sleeping husbandman, towards whom a “hideous snake” is making its way, makes use of his only means, his little sting, to awaken the sleeper—by whose first hasty movement he is brushed aside and slain. The husbandman is Leicester, the gnat is his humble friend Spenser, who thus allegorically alludes to their relations:

1. James Howell. “*Epistolæ Ho-Eliaŋae*,” March 1, 1618.

2. Masson. “*Drummond of Hawthornden*,” p. 100

3. “*To Eliz. Countess of Rutland*” (“*The Forest*”).

4. Thomas Cartwright, the well-known Puritan controversialist, owed him much for protection, and received from him a pension of £50 yearly for life. See D.N.B.

5. Greene’s “*Planetomachia*” (1585); Florio’s “*First Fruits*” (1598); Hake’s “*News out of Poules Churchyarde*”; Spenser’s “*Vergil’s Gnat*” (publ. 1595), “long since dedicated.”

Wrong'd yet not daring to expresse my paine,
To you (great Lord) the causer of my care,
In cloudie teares my case I thus complaine
Unto yourselfe, that onely privie are.
But if that any Oedipus unaware
Shall chaunce, through power of some divining spright
To reade the secret of this riddle rare,
And know the purport of my evil plight
Let him rest pleased with his own insight.

But whatso by myselfe may not be shoven.
May by this gnat's complaint be easily knowen.

In the latter part of the poem the ghost of the gnat appears to the husbandman, and reproaches him for the death which has exiled him from all joy into the "waste wilderness" of Hades. Is Spenser referring to his own exile, far from all the joys of cultivated society, in Irish wilds? Was the patronage of Leicester, which sent the poet to Ireland as secretary to Lord Grey, in reality a convenient mode of freeing himself from a man to whom he owed too much? The riddle is still undeciphered.

The favourite of Elizabeth's declining years, Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, was also the recipient of many dedications and much eulogy from literary men. He was himself something of a poet, a masque-writer, and an artist. It was he who took upon himself the cost of Spenser's funeral; and he was an intimate friend of the Earl of Southampton, Shakespere's friend and patron.

Southampton was probably, after Sidney, the most discerning and generous of all the aristocratic patrons of literature at the opening of the seventeenth century. He gave to Sir Thomas Bodley one hundred pounds, to buy books for his new public library.¹ He was devoted to the drama, at one time, when in disgrace, filling his abundant leisure "by going to plays nearly every day."

1. See "Reliquiæ Bodleianæ," 1703, p. 170.

He was a generous friend to Nash, Barnabe Barnes, Markham, Florio, Minshew, and Daniel; and he is eulogized by innumerable writers, including Chapman, Sylvester, Wither, Braithwaite, Beaumont, and Henry Lok. His relations with Shakspeare must have been intimate; there is a perceptible difference of tone between the two dedications (of "Venus and Adonis" and of "Lucrece") addressed to him by the great poet, the later of the two clearly expressing not so much gratitude as personal affection. It is most probable that he, and not Pembroke, is the friend who is addressed in the sonnets.

Other noble benefactors must be passed over lightly. Most famous is Lucy, Countess of Bedford, the gifted niece of the poet, Sir John Harington. During the reign of James I. she was the favourite patroness of the literary world, generously helpful to many, and receiving from writers of acknowledged eminence such as Drayton, Daniel, Jonson, Chapman, and John Davies of Hereford, grateful praises. Donne addressed several of his most beautiful and sincere poems to her. She seems to have been peculiarly happy in her choice of men of real genius as protégés.

Other patronesses were Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, who engaged Daniel as tutor to her daughter, Lady Anne Clifford, and who accepted the dedication of a poem by Spenser; and the Elizabeth Careys, mother and daughter, with whom Spenser claimed relationship in the dedication of his poem "Muiopotmos," and to whom Nash twice acknowledges his great indebtedness.¹

It cannot have escaped notice that all these patrons have many protégés; and it will be surmised that, this being the case, their patronage was probably occasional rather than permanent, and limited in amount.

A frequent form of patronage was the bestowal of an annuity, large or small. Jonson had from the Crown an

1. "Terrors of the Night" (1594), Dedication. "Christ's Tears" (1593), Dedication.

annuity of 100 marks, raised at his own request to £100. Prince Henry gave Michael Drayton a pension of £10, and Joshua Sylvester one of £20. It need hardly be pointed out that, even for the barest subsistence (except in Jonson's case) these annuities could only serve to supplement some other income.

Maintenance at the University was a form of bounty bestowed by many benefactors upon promising youths. It was an old practice, dating from mediæval University days, when a considerable proportion of the scholars lived upon charity, and when it was a work of piety to bestow upon a talented youth the training which might fit him for holy orders. Camden, and Speght, and many more were thus indebted to private benefactors for their University training. It was not, however, the invariable rule that such patronage was followed up by adequate help later on.

The least burdensome method of bestowing patronage was to confer upon the protégé some official appointment. Spenser, for example, was made secretary to Lord Grey of Wilton, and later on a clerk in the Irish Court of Chancery, and to the Council of Munster. Whether such appointments were likely to aid or to thwart the poet in his chief pursuit seems to have been a question rarely considered even in earlier days. In Spenser's case it can hardly be doubted that, though they may for a time have freed him from sordid cares, they seriously encroached upon his leisure. If the official duties could be fulfilled by delegation, the evil was, of course, avoided.

Few generous-minded persons would now care to adopt a method of benefaction which appears in the sixteenth century to have been fairly frequent—viz., that of affording hospitality to the author. Nash was by no means a tactful or delicate-minded man, yet he was probably housed for some considerable time by the generous Careys.¹ It is to be hoped that they met with

1. See his reference to them in "Terrors of the Night," dedication and opening paragraph.

some recompense in the caustic wit of his conversation. John Donne, with his whole family, was hospitably housed for five years by Sir Robert Drury. Even the dogmatic, arrogant Ben Jonson lived as the guest of Esmé Stuart, Lord d'Aubigny, also for five years. Spenser, too, was certainly at one time the guest of the Earl of Leicester—for how long a period is not known.

Other patrons would bestow gifts of money, varying in amount. King Charles—not usually very generous to literary men, once gave Jonson a present of £100; and Mr. Sidney Lee accepts as trustworthy the anecdote related by Nicholas Rowe, that the Earl of Southampton upon one occasion gave to Shakspeare the munificent sum of £1,000.

One fact emerges clearly as the result of study of this period. However widespread was the habit of patronizing men of letters, the bounty provided did not nearly suffice for the existing writers. It reached very few in sufficient amount to satisfy either their expectations or their needs. Nor do the writers scruple to express their discontent. The most outspoken are Nash—who never minced his words—and the writer of the “Pilgrimage to Parnassus” (1597). Nash describes his fruitless efforts to court patronage by his writings. “All in veine I sate up late and rose early, contended with the colde and conversed with scarcitie; for all my labours turned to loss, my vulgar muse was despised and neglected, my paines not regarded, or slightly rewarded, and I myselfe (in prime of my best wit) laid open to povertie. Whereupon . . . I accused my fortune, railed on my patrons . . .”¹ The unfortunate poet in the “Pilgrimage to Parnassus” spent many years in study, looking still to meeting with “some good Mecaenas that liberalie would reward”; but alas! so long did he feed on hope that he well-nigh starved.²

Why was this bitter experience so common? Daniel

1. “Piers Peniles.” Works, ed. Grosart, ii, 9.

2. “Pilgrimage to Parnassus” (1597), ed. Macray, p. 20.

attributes it, not to indifference, but to the barriers between the great and their inferiors in station, which keep from them the knowledge of the need for their bounty.

Would they but be pleased to know, how small
A portion of that overflowing waste
Which runs from them, would turn the wheels, and all
The frame of wit, to make their glory last,
I thinke they would do something; but the stir
Still about greatness, gives it not the space
To look out from itself, or to confer
Grace but by chance, and as men are in place.¹

Daniel speaks charitably. He had indeed himself much cause for gratitude. Others might have spoken as charitably had they realized the further fact,—that the demands made upon patronage were too heavy to be met. The system was breaking down under the stress of changed conditions. In olden times, if patrons were few, so also were writers. Moreover there was then absolutely no resource for the would-be writer but patronage or the monastery; failing these a man had to give up the attempt to live the literary life. In the days of Elizabeth and James I., on the other hand, while the latter of these refuges had disappeared, thus leaving patronage to bear an additional burden, only partly relieved by the opening up of a publishers' market for manuscripts, other circumstances, newly arisen, tended to increase the number of professional writers beyond the old limits. The growing accessibility of books fostered literary studies and ambitions; the changes which had taken place in education had tended to give more prominence to the Humanities; and further, the fashionable Court interest in literature, and the general popularity of poetry and of drama, seemed to open out alluring prospects of fame and profit to writers.

1. Verses to J. Florio, 1611, prefixed to "Queen Anne's New World of Words."

Hence the class of professional writers increased out of proportion to the class amongst whom patrons were to be found. The only persons who regarded very seriously their obligations as patrons of the literary man were the higher nobility, and the older country gentry. But these were neither very wealthy nor very numerous, and were heavily burdened by increased expenditure due to social conditions. On the other hand, the wealthy *nouveaux-riches* either held such obligations lightly, or held views which rendered them indifferent altogether to the literary art.

Hence, inevitably, changed relations between patron and protégé. Of old, a talented youth would be educated by his natural protector, the great man of his birthplace, and, later on, fostered and encouraged by him in literary production. The return to be made for this beneficence was simply the creation of learned or artistic work for the gratification of his patron's immediate circle of friends.¹ Now, he had become merely one of a crowd of unattached suitors, with few or no special claims, striving to snatch for himself a share of the bounty which not all could possibly obtain. He had to live in the midst of perpetual rivalry; he must for ever be striving to bid higher than his fellows. Literary productions became, not a graceful and natural outcome of favourable circumstances contrived by his patron; but eager bids for bounty by the needy. If he were so fortunate as to be able to give thanks for favours received, beneath the gratitude could constantly be detected craven fear lest no more should be forthcoming. The reader is saddened by the inevitable prominence given, in dedications, to the patron's charity, rather than to his taste or judgement. In this, again, Nash is a most shameless offender; see his reason for eulogizing

1. Of course it is not meant to suggest that no writer in earlier times ever found himself without a patron, or insufficiently helped. But the broad general distinction between the 14th century and the 16th century, in this matter, is clear.

Mistress Elizabeth Carey :¹—"Divine lady, you I must and will memorize more especially, for you recompense learning extraordinarily."

The bait which the writer holds out is public eulogy. Under earlier conditions of patronage there had been but small occasion for this. A gracefully turned compliment, a promise of lasting remembrance, the choice, as subject for imaginative treatment, of some incident connected with the patron,—this was all that was required. The work itself was sufficient return for benefits received; and the fact that manuscript copies were necessarily few and expensive rendered it impossible to advertise to a world of outsiders the beneficence of the patron. But in the Elizabethan age the poet's work most frequently owned no natural patron; the patron himself had to be attracted by artificial means. He must be bribed by the offer of widespread fame, must be extolled for virtues raising him above the common run of benefactors. Hence extravagance in eulogy; hence servile humility in the writer. If any one should care to know to what lengths of exaggerated praise a man of genius could be carried in his desire to earn the good will of a possible patron, let him study the verses addressed by John Donne to the bereaved father of Mistress Elizabeth Drury, a girl of fifteen, and probably unknown to Donne. Transfigured though they are by imaginative power, they yet betray unmistakeable signs of the effort to bid high. The verses reached their mark, and Donne became for many years the intimate friend and dependant of the wealthy Sir Robert Drury.

Abundant evidence is forthcoming of the slight nature of the bond between patron and writer. An elegy by an even greater poet, the "Daphnaïda" of Spenser,—a beautiful but conventional lament,—was written at the request of a chance patron on a lady whom he had never seen! And how different are these two eulogistic mourning poems from Chaucer's simple, touching lament for the

1. "Christ's Tears," Dedication (1593).

death of his patron's wife, Blanche the Duchess! *He* had known and loved the beautiful, gracious woman whom he honoured in his poem; he had seen her

"daunce so comlily,
Carole and synge so swetely,
Laugh and pleye so womanly,"

and his verses, artistically equalled by Donne's and Spenser's, convey a sense of reality and sincerity which is lacking to theirs.

To the student of the inner history of the lives of professional writers in this age, nothing is more striking than the signs of the loosening of the personal bond between patron and poet. It is true that instances can be cited from other times and other countries, of men of genius unable to gain permanent patronage. The famous Aretino (1492—1557) passed from one patron to another in rapid succession. But he treated his protectors most shamefully. If the stories concerning him are to be believed, he did not scruple to insult, defame, and defraud them. The marvel is that he should generally, in spite of this, have found some rich nobleman willing to subsidise him; though in many cases this was done from fear. In Elizabethan England, it was the exception even for men of real talent, against whom no serious accusations can be alleged, to be able to meet with more than casual benefactions. Many dedications are obviously addressed to complete strangers; more to men whose acceptance of the dedication is clearly the utmost that the writer ventures to hope for. Amongst the most pathetic, with its implied reproach to the man on whom the writer conceived he *had* natural claims, is Philip Massinger's to Charles, Lord Herbert, son of the Earl of Pembroke.

"However I could never arrive at the happiness to be made known to your lordship, yet a desire, born with me, to make a tender of all duties and service to the

noble family of the Herberts, descends to me as an inheritance from my dead father Philip Massinger. . . ."¹

It is a sure sign of the lack of effective patronage, when an author dedicates his works to a great variety of patrons. Thus poor Robert Greene has not less than sixteen different patrons for seventeen books. Nash's one brief period of comparative prosperity led to the dedication of two successive books² to his generous friends the Careys: his friendlessness is shown by the variety of his other dedications.

Of course, few dedications were in themselves adequate to attract more than a passing charity. A man could not hope for life-long recognition on the strength of an extravagant compliment at the head of a literary trifle. Therefore dedications were not relied upon to do more than procure a sum of money, varying according to the means and disposition of the dedicatee, and his estimate of the work. A dedication might sometimes induce a man of rank to use his influence in obtaining for the writer some unimportant post; but as such posts were nearly always bestowed simply "in reversion," the applicant often preferred a prompt money reward. The uncertain value of such reversions is painfully illustrated by the life-long waiting of the unfortunate John Lyly for the office of Master of the Revels, the holder of which persisted in outliving him. In vain the unlucky writer pleaded for something more substantial,—“some lande, some good fines or forfeitures . . . that seeing nothing will come by the Revells, I may pray (*i.e.* prey) uppon the Rebels. Thirteene yeares your highness' servant, but yet nothing . . . a thousand hopes, but all nothing, a hundred promises but yet nothing . . . my last will is shorter than myne invension: but three legacies, patience

1. Dedication of "The Bondman" (1623). His father's real name was Arthur; in 1624 edition (Bodleian Library) it is given as "Arthur"; in the 1638 edition in the Cambridge University Library it is still given as "Philip."

2. "Christ's Tears over Jerusalem" (1593); "Terrors of the Night" (1594).

to my creditors, melancholie without measure to my friends, and beggerie without shame to my family.”¹ A humbler instance of the futility of many bits of patronage is afforded by the following letter from Christopher Ocland to Sir Julius Caesar (13th Sept., 1589). Incidentally it throws interesting light upon methods sometimes employed for filling positions under Government :

“I made a book of late in English and did for some especiall causes dedicate the same to my Lorde of Warwicke. I was in consideration of the same to see about the Tower and St. Katherine’s for a gunner’s roome (*i.e.* a post as gunner) in the Tower (for they be of my Lord of Warwicke’s being Master of the Ordnance’ gifte) and to finde out a man meete for the same who might give me some competent piece of money, and my said Lorde wolde for my sake bestow the same roome upon him. Whilst I seeke this, fifteen or more days be spent, and the time lost. . . . I shall have money for the same gunner’s roome at Easter next, and a yeare hence. So frustate of my purpose I fall into want . . . such is my ill hap and fortune.”²

A money fee was, then, in most cases preferable, and more usual. It was the sixteenth-century substitute, not so much for genuine patronage, as for the chance charity afforded in mediæval times to poor University scholars. The typical scholar was always poor, and lived as a matter of course upon charity—either that of the individual or of the public in general.

For al that he might of his frendes hente
On bookes and on lernynge he it spente,
And bisily gan for the soules preye
Of hem that gaf him wherewith to scoleye.³

The Elizabethan writer, unlike Chaucer’s Scholar, did little praying for souls; all the same, he received readily

1. “Euphues” (1579), ed. E. Arber. Introduction, p. 10.
2. Camd. Soc. “Letters of Eminent Literary Men” (1843), p. 71.
3. Chaucer. “Canterbury Tales,” Prol. 299–302.

all gifts that fell in his way. The usual fee paid for the dedication of a drama was forty shillings,¹ but far smaller sums, as low even as half-a-crown, were thankfully received.

There is no evidence of much demand for dedications amongst the wealthy; the supply clearly exceeded it. In this, if in nothing else, the sixteenth-century writer was less fortunate than his successor in the later seventeenth century. Then, the universal fashion in the upper classes of parading literary taste and generosity, produced a considerable demand for dedications—so much so that writers were known to pen a dedication, and then write the book as a mere appendage to it.

It is to be noted that the approbation of a great man had a value not to be measured by the bounty actually bestowed upon the writer. Its indirect effect upon the general public was at least equally important. Jonson, pleasing himself by anticipating the acceptance of his verses by Lord Digby, already in imagination sees the public clamouring for copies :

. . . O, what a fame 'twill be,
What reputation to my lines and me!
. . . What copies shall be had
What transcripts begged!
Being sent to one they will be read of all.² •

It is this consciousness of the power of aristocratic example that causes Samuel Daniel to make dignified appeal to the

. . . mightie Lords, that with respected grace
Doe at the sterne of faire example stand.

He urges them to "holde up disgraced knowledge from the ground." Alas! he is constrained sadly to confess

1. N. Field. Dedication of "A Woman is a Weathercock" (1612). The sum was probably equal to £10 or £12 present money. The Earl of Northumberland gave to George Peele £3, in June, 1593, upon the presentation of a congratulatory poem. See Hist. MSS. Comm., Vol. vi, App., p. 227.

2. "To Lady Digby." "Underwoods." Works, ed. Gifford (1816), Vol. ix, p. 48.

. . . the small respect

That these great-seeming best of men do give.

(Whose brow begets the inferior sort's neglect.)¹

Some of these great-seeming ones were so fully conscious of the value of their smile, that they considered the unfortunate author amply rewarded by the mere acceptance of a dedication. But, indeed, such acceptance was by no means, in all cases, the simple thing it would appear. Patrons occasionally realized, to their cost, that certain obligations entailed by patronage were not so easily evaded as the money one. Slight as the bond between patron and author had now usually become, the old tradition as to the responsibility of the great lord for his dependants still held sway; the later sixteenth century was a suspicious age, as will be shown later on; and authors relied upon the protection of a powerful patron as a sufficient answer to accusations political or moral. Spenser, dedicating "Colin Clout" to Raleigh, entreats him to protect it with his good countenance "against the malice of evil mouths which are always wide open to carp at and misconstrue my simple meaning." Lodge durst not expose his poems to the ill-will of the world "except they were graced with some noble and worthy patron."² Edward Hake, when dedicating to Leicester his "News out of Paul's Churchyard," evidently had in view particularly the powerful protection thus procured for his book, "beset with deadly hate."

This was all very well so long as suspicion did not emanate from, or take root in high places: but occasionally patrons were called upon to face their responsibilities in somewhat serious fashion. If writers sometimes suffered from an unlucky chance allusion to the suspected favourite Essex, Essex himself had at times reason to wish himself less popular with writers. Here is an interesting letter relating a bit of Court scandal in 1595, exalted names being represented by cyphers:

1. "Musophilus," ll. 313-19; 659-61.

2. "Fig for Momus"; dedication to Earl of Derby (1595).

" My Lord,

Upon Monday last, 1500 (Q. Elizabeth) shewed 1000 (E. of Essex) a printed book of t—t, Title to a—a. In yt there is, as I here, dangerous praises of 1000, of his Valour and Worthyness, which doth hym harm here. At his coming from Court he was observed to look wan and pale, being exceedingly troubled at this great piece of villanie done unto hym. . . . The book I spake of is dedicated to my Lord Essex, and printed beyond sea, and 'tis thought to be Treason to have it. To wryte of these things are dangerous in so perillous a tyme, but I hope it will be no offence to impart unto you th' actions of this place."¹

Another mischief-making dedication to Essex is noted in March, 1559, in the correspondence of John Chamberlain. "The treatise of Henry the Fourth² is reasonable well written . . . Here hath beene . . . many exceptions taken, especially to the Epistle, which was a short thing in Latin dedicated to the Erle of Essex, and objected to him in goode earnest, whereupon there was comaundment it shold be cut out of the booke . . . for my part I can find no such buggeswords, but that everything is as it is taken."³ Possibly in both these cases Essex was perfectly innocent and had not even seen the objectionable works.

The Earl of Devonshire found difficulty in disentangling himself from the difficulties in which Daniel, his protégé, had involved him by the acting of his play, "Philotas" (1600). Malicious persons persuaded the authorities that it bore some reference to the unfortunate Earl of Essex (executed in 1601), and Daniel seems to have tried to prove his innocence by asserting his patron's approbation of the piece. The Earl, having been implicated with Essex, was sensitive, and remon-

1. Letter from Roland Whyte to Sir R. Sidney (25th Nov., 1595). Collins, "Sidney Papers," i, 357.

2. Haywards' "History of Henry IV."

3. Chamberlain's Letters. Camden Soc., 1861, p. 47-8 (Old Series).

strated, and Daniel wrote to excuse himself. "I said I had read some part of it to your honour, and this I said, having none else of power to grace me now in Court, and hoping that you out of your knowledge of books, or favour of letters, and me, might answer that there is nothing in it disagreeing, nor anything, as I proteste there is not, but out of the universal notions of ambition and envy, the perpetual arguments of books and tragedies. I did not say that you encouraged me unto the presenting of it (*i.e.*, on the stage); if I should I had been a villain, for that when I showed it to your honour I was not resolved to have it acted. . . ."¹ It is pleasant to know that between them the culprits must have satisfied the authorities, for "Philotas" was published in 1605, the following year.

The unfortunate effects of the gradual breaking-up of the old system of patronage are but too patent. The uncertainty of the relation bred uneasiness and discontent. These feelings might be absent, it is true, in the case of a man in Daniel's position, conscious of feeling and of inspiring genuine respect and confidence. They are absent, too, in Shakspeare's case. His relations with Southampton, beginning with an ordinary dedication expressive of admiration and hope, ripened very rapidly into the affectionate intimacy which is the theme of his second dedication, and the worshipping love expressed in the "Sonnets."² There is no question here of the relation of patron and dependant. The gratitude Shakspeare utters is for affection, not for a patron's benefits; he asks for and offers love, does not barter praise for bounty. Jonson also betrays very little sense of holding an uncertain, difficult position. This is due partly to the consciousness of his greatness, partly also, however, to a certain lack of sensitiveness. He never shrank from asking, because he felt he deserved, and because no delicacy of feeling checked him. Hence he boldly wrote

1. Quoted by Grosart. Daniel's "Works," i, p. 23.

2. If we accept the "Southampton" theory of the Sonnets.

his "Epistle Mendicant," calling upon the Lord High Treasurer to note that it is "no less renown" to relieve "a bedrid wit, than a besieged town." He felt it no dishonour, but a natural thing to send to King Charles "The Humble Petition of Poor Ben," that his pension of 100 marks might be increased to pounds.

But even Jonson took pride in declaring that, though he accepted, he *chose* from whom he would accept;¹ and to natures of finer fibre the necessity of asking was very bitter. Spenser was fortunately spared, for the most part, this unpleasing task; but he incurred the keenest humiliation of his life when, following Raleigh's advice, he went to lay his "Faery Queene" before Elizabeth. Other men might willingly prowl in antechambers day after day in the hope of snatching a little "court holy water"—this humiliating experience wrung from him the bitterest words ever uttered by a suitor at Elizabeth's Court:

Most miserable man, whom wicked fate
Hath brought to Court, to sue for had ywist
That few have found, and manie one hath mist!
Full little knowest thou, that hast not tride,
What hell it is in suing long to bide:
To lose good dayes that might be better spent:
To waste long nights in pensive discontent:
To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow;
To feed on hope, to pine with feare and sorrow;
To have thy Princes grace, yet want her Peeres;
To have thy asking, yet wait manie yeeres;
To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares;
To eat thy heart through comfortless despair;
To fawne, to crouch, to waite, to ride, to ronne,
To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.
Unhappy wight, borne to disastrous end,
That doth his life in so long tendance spend!²

1. "To Sir Edward Sackville." "Underwoods." Works, ed. Gifford (1816), Vol. viii, p. 339.

2. "Mother Hubbard's Tale," ll. 893-909 (Pr. 1591). Perhaps Sidney's unfailing sympathy for the struggling man of letters was to some extent prompted by his own experiences. He, too, knew the bitterness of asking, and asking in vain, for much needed help. There is extant a

Such experiences—and it must be remembered that they were the ordinary lot of the literary man—were indeed embittering. John Lyly's despairing appeal to his Royal Mistress has been noted; Nash gives us in detail a picture of the galling treatment experienced by those poets who addressed themselves to patrons of lower rank. Nash was not thin-skinned; we feel that he would have put up with the insults were bounty forthcoming; but contemptuous niggardliness aroused his ire:

"Alas, it is an easie matter for a goodlie tall fellow that shineth in his silkes, to come and outface a poor simple pedant in a thredbare cloke, and tell him his booke is pretty, but at this time he is not provided for him: marrie, about two or three daies hence if he come that waie, his page shall say that he is not within, or else he is so busy with my Lord How-shall-ye-call-him . . . that he may not be spoken withal. These are the common courses of the world . . . Give . . . a dog but a bone, and he'll wag his tayle; but give me one of my young masters a booke, and he will put off his hat and blush and so go his waie . . . I know him that had thanks for three years' work . . . We want an Aretine amongst us that might strip these golden asses."¹

Lucky, indeed, was Camden, who, more fortunate even than Daniel in having been early placed in a permanent position of independence, could say to Usher:—"I never made suit to any man, no, not to His Majesty, but for a matter of course incident to my place; neither, God be praised, I needed; having gathered a contented sufficiency by my long labours in the school."² But Camden ranks among the learned and historical writers, who, apparently, received rather more encouragement

pathetic letter from him beseeching Sir Charles Hatton to befriend him in a suit to Her Majesty. He hopes Hatton's good services will prevail, but if not, adds Sidney with reluctance, "I will even shamelessly once in my life bring it to Her Majesty myself: need obeys no law!" (13th Nov., 1581). Sir Harris Nicholas, "Memoirs of Hatton," (1847), p. 211.

1. "Piers Peniles" (1592). "Works," ed. Grosart, ii, p. 130.

2. Quoted, D. N. B.

from patrons than was usually bestowed upon the mere literary artist. He received substantial favours from the two Goodmans, Sir Fulke Greville, and Lord Burleigh.¹

Sordid rivalry among authors was the inevitable consequence of the struggle for favour. Daniel, in his noble poem, "Musophilus," devotes a passage to lamenting the undignified competition for patronage. Because the number of writers has grown so great that there is not room for all, they "kick and thrust and shoulder," and quarrel "like scolding wives." Nicholas Breton expresses the matter in still more homely fashion, in his wish that—

. . . all scholars should be friends,
And Poets not to brawle for puddings' ends.²

Jonson, with his Court pension, his reputation as masque writer, and his many noble patrons, was a great mark for envy. Nor was he at all aggrieved by this: in fact, he boasted of it, and used it as an argument when asking for "more,"³ but he was not himself above envying others. He told Drummond that Samuel Daniel "was at jealousies with him," though the feeling seems to have been chiefly on his own side. He called Daniel "no poet"; he parodied his verses, and he could not refrain from a somewhat childish expression of his annoyance that Daniel should be befriended by the Duchess of Bedford, and be regarded as "a better verser . . . or poet . . . in the court account," than himself.⁴

Nor was Shakspeare, in spite of the tie of strong personal affection which bound him to his patron, free from

1. See Preface to E. Gibson's ed. of Camden's "Britannia" (1772). The mathematician, Warner, had a pension of £40 from the Earl of Northumberland, and the learned Harriott had a pension of £120 a year from the same patron. Aubrey; ed. Clark, Vol. ii, p. 16

2. Breton. "No Whipping but a tripping." Works, ed. Grosart, i, p. 34.

3. "Humble Petition of Poor Ben." "Underwoods." Works, ed. Gifford (1816), Vol. ix, p. 43.

4. "To Elizabeth, Countess of Rutland." "The Forest" (1616).

the literary rivalry which dogged the footsteps of all Elizabethan writers. One poet, at least, seems to have succeeded in stealing from him, by "the proud full sail of his great verse," some of his patron's favour; Shakspeare was blamed for being less assiduous in eulogy. The greater poet was not above the retort that at least his silence did no harm, whereas the words of others brought "a tomb" where they were intended to "give life." But he betrays sensitiveness under this painful rivalry, beseeching his patron friend to judge "who it is that says most." Let others, he pleads, be esteemed for their "gross painting," their "precious phrase," their "breath of words"; *he* would be valued for his "dumb thoughts, speaking in effect."¹

Amongst other evils entailed upon self-respecting writers by their dependence upon patronage was the inevitable accusation of "mercenary flattery," "fawning eloquence" and servility. Nor are many of them to be wholly acquitted. When a man so highly placed as Francis Bacon is to be found soliciting from His Majesty a theme for treatment, with the remark:—"I should with more alacrity embrace your Majesty's direction than my own choice,"² we cannot be surprised that meaner writers should at times display servility. Even a writer so highminded as Massinger apologized for his theme on the ground that his own "low fortune" prevented his refusing "what by his patron he was called unto."³ From Churchyard, as later passages will show, we need not look for much self-respect, but the following shows him, though a writer of some repute in his own day, fallen beneath contempt. He is dedicating to Sir Walter Raleigh, and, conscious of having shown some servility, thus seeks to justify himself. "And if the world say . . . I show a kind of adulation, to fawn for favour on those that are happy; I answer that it is a

1. Sonnets LXXXII-LXXXVI.

2. "Works," ed. Spedding (1874), xiv, p. 358 (20th March, 1620).

3. "A Very Woman." Prologue.

point of wisdom, which my betters have taught me . . . I take an example from the fish that follows the stream."¹

After such an instance of moral debasement may perhaps fitly follow a reference to the dedication in which James I. shows, on the other hand, his sense of his own exalted position. It being impossible for *him* to assume the properly humble attitude of a dedicator to any human being, he actually wrote the following irreverent and bombastic dedication: "To the Honour of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father, the only *θεάνθρωπος*, Mediator, and Reconciler of mankind. In sign of thankfulness, His most Humble and most obliged servant James, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, doth dedicate and consecrate this his Declaration."²

On the other hand, if the dedicator escaped the snare of servility, he was liable to fall into another, that of impudence and shameless effrontery. Dekker points out that authors will without blushing claim acquaintance with men as patrons whom they scarcely know.³ A most flagrant instance of this is familiar to all, in the case of Stephen Gosson's impudent unauthorized dedication of his attack upon poets and others (in the "Schoole of Abuse") to Sir Philip Sidney—a piece of impertinence for which, as Spenser declares, he "was for his labor scorned."⁴ It is not perhaps so generally known that, in the year of Sidney's death, Gosson doubled his effrontery by dedicating to the same lover of art another work in which he rendered thanks for the protection Sidney's name had afforded to the earlier one!⁵

Happily there were men who rose superior to these temptations. When we find a writer like Heywood,

1. "A spark of Friendship" (1588). Harleian Miscell. I., Vol. iii, p. 248.

2. "Answer to the work of Conrad Vorstius on the Nature and Attributes of God." Folio works, 1616.

3. "News from Hell" (ed. 1606). Grosart, "Works," ii. (Dedication).

4. Spenser's "Works," Globe ed., p. 706.

5. "Ephemerides of Phialo" (1579), Dedication.

again and again, making of his dedications "a due acknowledgement, without the sordid expectation of reward, or servile imputation of flattery";¹ we welcome the proof that he, at least, preserved the true poet's self-respect. Wither dedicated his "Shepherd's Hunting," to all the "known and unknown sympathisers" who had felt for him during his imprisonment; and we honour the manly lines in which he says:

I have no minde to flatter; though I might
Be made some Lord's companion, or a Knight.
Nor shall my verse for me on begging goe,
Though I might starve, unlesse it did doe so.
. . . Oh! how I scorne
Those Raptures, which are free and nobly borne
Should Fidler-like, for entertainment scrape
At strangers' windows, and goe play the ape
In counterfeiting Passion when there's none.²

His words suggest what is only too true, that men of weak principle were betrayed by their necessities into even worse than servility—into a deliberate hypocrisy, a degraded pandering to the unworthy. That this was so is clear from the satiric portrait of the poet given in the "Pilgrimage to Parnassus." Draining his inspiration from the pint-pot, he exclaims: "Nowe I am fitt to write a book! Would anie leaden Mydas, anie mossie patron, have his asse's ears deified, let him but come and give me some prettie sprinkling to maintaine the expenses of my throate, and I'll drop out such an encomium on him that shall immortalize him as long as there is ever a booke-binder in Englande."³ It is by no means certain that Nash in his necessities was fettered by very high principles; evidently bounty is a main passport to his praises. If any Maecenas will bind Nash to him by his bounty, then will the writer "doe him as much honour" as any poet "of his beardless years" in England.⁴ It is,

1. Preface to "The Fair Maid of the West" (acted 1617).

2. "Wither's Motto" (1621), fol. B.

3. "Pilgrimage to Parnassus" (1600), ed. Macray, p. 6. Is this a satire on Nash himself? See the ensuing quotation.

4. "Piers Penniles" (1592). "Works," ed. Grosart, ii, 64.

perhaps, only fair, however, to interpret these and such like reckless utterances in the light of his evidently genuine devotion to art, as shown in other passages of his work.

The more scrupulous writers did their utmost to avoid the slightest imputation of fawning servility. They chose for patrons of their works personages of no particular public reputation; they dedicated to personal friends and benefactors, as thank-offering, not as bait; and they protested against the undue servility of their less worthy fellows, by a courteous insistence upon the value of their own offerings. Daniel writes to his patrons as to equals.¹ Chapman assures Sir Thomas Howard that the work he presents to him contains matter no less worthy the reading than any others recently favoured by great nobles;² and Webster, in dedicating the "Duchess of Malfi" to Lord Berkeley, takes still higher ground. "I am confident," he says, "this work is not unworthy your honour's perusal; for by such poems as this poets have kissed the hands of great princes, and drawn their gentle eyes to look down upon their sheets of paper, when the poets themselves were bound up in their winding sheets." Such words go far to redeem the honour of the professional writer, soiled by such as Nash, Gosson and Churchyard!

Nor were servility and effrontery the worst of the evils attendant upon patronage. To them was added fraud. We owe to Dekker an interesting exposure of the tricks played by cheating knaves upon unsuspecting patrons. These rogues first got small pamphlets printed—generally of matter filched from other writers. They then procured the names of some large number of gentry, printed copies of a dedicatory epistle with a different patron's name to each; then went round, and obtained

1. See his noble, thoughtful epistles to Lord Keeper Egerton, and to the Bishop of Winchester, and his Funeral Poem on the Duke of Devonshire. "Works," i.

2. Dedication of "Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois" (1613).

as many fees as possible for this single dedication and pamphlet. If the supposed dedicatee was suspicious, and made inquiries amongst the stationers or printers, the wily knaves were prepared for him. They had already distributed amongst the trade a number of copies of the work, but without the dedication—for which, of course, they were awaiting permission! “Thus the liberality of a nobleman or of a gentleman is abused; thus their bounty is brought into scorn and contempt: thus men are cheated of their bounty, giving much for that . . . which is common abroad and put away for base prices.”¹

There is another point of view to be considered—that of the patron himself. To him, it is clear, the endless importunities of struggling writers must have presented a serious dilemma. Amid so many, how decide between their claims? How benefit any considerable number in any practical way? Yet how distinguish between them? Here and there a patron of genuine taste, and sufficient leisure could find means of discriminating: here and there chance placed naturally under his protection a man of real genius. But it is obvious that, for one reason or another, many patrons were driven to distribute their benefits widely, rather than concentrate them and thus confer lifelong benefit, and that many were content with a perfunctory response to direct appeals. Sir Philip Sidney stands out among the men of rank of his time as one whose bounty was always discriminating and generous. Yet, as we know, he was a poor man, constantly in difficulties for lack of means. It was the genuineness and discrimination of his love of literature which earned him such warm and unqualified tributes, and he has come down to posterity as the one literary patron to whom, though no rich man, all writers unite in gratitude. Nor can we forget that it was undoubtedly his influence that gained for Spenser the favour of Lord Grey.

1. Dekker. “Lanthorn and Candlelight” (ed. 1609). “Works,” iii, 237.

To the average young man of rank or wealth, unsupported by a love of art or letters, the perpetual appeal of the professional writer must have been simply an unqualified nuisance. He bore with it, as a burden incident to rank and fashion; he even, to a certain extent, encouraged it as a recognition of his own superiority, but it was inevitable that much patronage should be most grudgingly bestowed. Nash was probably perfectly justified in his complaint that "there is not that strict observation of honour which hath bene heretofore. Men of great calling take it of merite to have their names eternized by poets; and whatsoever pamphlet or dedication encounters them, they put it up their sleeve and scarce give him thanks that presents it."¹ Thorpe's satirical advice to Blount on the correct behaviour of a patron completely bears out Nash's words.² Patronage, as a refuge for the author, was moribund.

It died hard. Struggling authors could not afford to let it die. They would "hang upon a young heir like a horse-leech"; they followed up the tracks of gouty patrons as if "hoping to wring some water from a flint"; they even descended to flattering and pandering to lackeys, in order to gain admission to the presence of an unwilling great man. Generations of needy authors begged, starved, and passed away before the day when Swift pilloried their shameless insincerity in his inimitable bookseller's dedication to the "Tale of a Tub." Generations were to pass before Johnson gave the *coup de grâce* to the long tottering system by his scornful retort to Lord Chesterfield.

1. "Piers Penniles." "Works," ii, 13.

2. Dedication of Marlowe's "Lucan" (1600). The burdensomeness of dedications seems to have been even greater in Germany. There, local authorities were driven to issue notices that they would in future acknowledge no dedications of literary productions unless written authorisation for the same had been previously secured. Mr. G. H. Putnam relates that a certain family, when a composition appeared dedicated to a deceased musical ancestor of theirs, issued a notice that the dedication must be withdrawn unless authorisation from the "shade" was forthcoming!

CHAPTER II.

AUTHORS AND OFFICIAL CENSORS.

"I holde no place better governed [than London], how ever in so great a sea of all waters there cannot chuse but be some quicksands and rockes and shelves . . ."

—NASH. "Have with you to Saffron Walden," *Works*, ed. Grosart (1883-4), III, p. 192-3.

REDUCED as legal interference now is to a minimum, and exerted far more with a view to protection than to repression, it is difficult for a modern writer to estimate at its full strength the paralysing influence of "authority" in Elizabethan days. The law of libel still, it is true, occasionally entangles an unwary journalist in its meshes; but in the sixteenth century, when the function of government in relation to literary production was mainly to pounce upon possible offenders, it was rare good fortune for the writer to succeed in eluding its grip.

The representatives of authority, so far as literature was concerned, were four: (1) the Privy Council and Court of Star Chamber, (2) the Court of High Commission, (3) the Stationers' Company, and (4) the Corporation of the City of London.¹

(1) *The Privy Council and Star Chamber* seem in their action to have been practically identical. So far as it is possible to define their relation to each other, it may perhaps be said that the latter partook of the nature of a

1. In Paris, the control and supervision of the press was in the hands of the University, and especially of the Faculty of Theology. The Parliament reserved to itself, however, the final word. See G. H. Putnam, "Books and their Makers in the Middle Ages," ii, pp. 441-2.

Committee of the Council, sitting as an open court and exercising judicial functions. It consisted of some of the most important Privy Councillors, with (or without) the addition of a varying number of other persons, chiefly judges. In practice, at any rate when dealing with matters which affected the press, the Star Chamber seems to have been almost identical with the few leading members of the Privy Council.

(2) *The Court of High Commission* was founded primarily as a means of exercising the royal supremacy in ecclesiastical affairs. It was composed of clergy and lawyers, but it assumed the ancient powers and adopted the procedure of the regular ecclesiastical courts, and tended gradually to supersede these. Its authority over the press arose out of the appointment of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London as supreme licensers for all printed publications.

It does not seem possible to distinguish with any precision between the functions exercised in regard to literature by the Court of High Commission, on the one hand, and the Star Chamber, on the other. Authors and publishers were cited, now before one authority, now before the other. Possibly, in theory, it was held that political offences fell under the jurisdiction of the latter; and offences against religion and morals under that of the former; but in an age when religion and politics were inseparably connected, such distinctions were not easily carried out in practice. Cases of mere suspicion were reported indifferently, either to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, or to Cecil, the Lord High Treasurer. For instance, Harrison, Warden of the Stationers' Company, reports to the Archbishop his discovery of a papistical book which he suspects to be new printed.¹ Dr. Charles Parkins sends to Cecil two "lewd books," which have reached him from beyond sea, with the cautious remark, "I will have no herbs of

1. T. Wright. "Elizabeth and her Times" 1838, Vol. i, p. 493 (13th Nov., 1573).

such smell about me without order.”¹ The Star Chamber and the Court of High Commission often worked in concert. Where the latter found it difficult to secure a conviction, the culprit would be called before the Star Chamber for further examination. Conversely, cases brought before the Star Chamber were not infrequently sent to be tried by the ecclesiastical court. There was no constitutional check upon the action of either tribunal. More than once attempts were made to contest the legality of the Court of High Commission and of its procedure. There was but one method of replying to such attacks, but it was a method well within the powers of an arbitrary court. Writings against it were suppressed. For speaking against it in Parliament a certain Morrice, the author of a suppressed pamphlet, was imprisoned for some years.²

Authority, as exercised by these bodies, was throughout repressive. The task of governing a nation distracted by religious discords and political intrigues, and harassed by fears for its future peace and prosperity, was far from easy, and the most level-headed statesman might be pardoned for being, in those days, guided rather by fear than by generosity. In particular, officials responsible for the preservation of order must inevitably have felt suspicious of the printing press. It was a newly-arisen force to be reckoned with, rapidly gaining strength, and as yet practically uncontrolled by any sense of responsibility. No wonder that its power for evil should have been dreaded by a perpetually menaced government.

At first the press was treated with the lenient vigilance which characterized the general policy of the earlier years of Elizabeth's reign. It is true that in 1559 an injunction was issued prohibiting the publication of any book or paper without previous license from appointed authorities. But it is clear from the records of the trade

1. Hist. MSS. Comm. Cal. MSS. Hatfield, Vol. iv, pp. 419, 423 (26th Nov., 1593).

2. J. S. Burn. "Court of High Commission," 1865, pp. 16-17.

that the injunction was enforced with little strictness; books continued for some time to be issued with no further formality than the payment of a fee to the Stationers' Company for entry on their register. This entry implied the sanction of the officials of the Company, but no licenser's name was usually given. Gradually, however, supervision became more strict. We find the officials fortifying themselves, in the case of books of divinity, with the advice of some "discreet minister" before sanctioning. They were probably already beginning to recognize the trend of government policy towards making them responsible for the publication of books thus recognized. They therefore adopted further the custom of adding, in the register, the name of the licenser.

But it was not until 1583 that direct interference began. In that year Aylmer, Bishop of London, called upon the Stationers' Company to report to him precisely the names of all the owners of printing presses, and the number possessed by each. It is significant that, during the course of the enquiry, it was ascertained that one printer was keeping two presses illegally secreted in a vault.¹

There was, at this time, ample excuse for a determination to exercise vigilant control over the press. Dangerous plots were afoot, and pernicious literature was being disseminated. The years 1581—1588 were years of secret intrigue, marked by the discovery of plot after plot. A Jesuit mission under Campion and Parsons was despatched to England in 1581, with the definite object of encouraging disaffection among Roman Catholics. Loyalty was deliberately undermined, and the assassination of the Queen was advocated. In 1583 a plot was discovered just in time; in 1585 Babington's abortive conspiracy was set on foot; and in 1586 all England was agitated by the trial, for complicity in it,

1. Arber. "Transcript of the Stationers' Register," i, 248.

of Mary, Queen of Scots. Throughout all these intrigues, Jesuit pamphlets, secretly printed, played their part in the endeavour to mould opinion. It was, then, under the impulse of dangers only too real, that the government determined to secure more complete control over the productions of the authorized press.

The result is seen in the Star Chamber Decree of 1586, by which for many years to come the printing press was bound. It strictly limited the number of printers, and it forbade all printing except within the liberties of the City of London, and in Oxford and Cambridge. No printer might set up a new press without direct permission; all presses were to be accessible to inspection; and, finally, all books and pamphlets issued must first receive the imprimatur of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London.¹ In 1595, under the influence of the disciplinarian Whitgift, the Court of High Commission reinforced these licensing regulations. Henceforward enactments concerning the press were chiefly concerned with limiting the number of master printers and of presses. There was one in 1615 and another in 1637.

The licensing of books was entrusted for the most part to the hands of the Church. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London were mainly responsible, though in some cases inferior Church dignitaries could and did act as licensors under their authority. No doubt the allotment of this function to ecclesiastical authorities arose naturally out of the traditional position of literature as the product of the labours of the "clerk," and *de facto* under ecclesiastical control. There was, moreover, further justification, if needed, in the fact that the offences committed were mainly against religion (or ecclesiasticism) and morality,—politics, in this era, being inseparably connected with religious questions.

Judicial machinery was provided by the Court of High Commission, already noticed.

1. See text of the Decree. Arber "Transcript," ii 807.

For particular species of books it became customary, for obvious reasons, to delegate the licensing to experts; thus, an eminent surgeon would license medical books, and the Earl Marshal books on heraldry. For plays the imprimatur of the Master of the Revels, or his deputy, became essential. A political work would sometimes have to wait for the direct sanction of the Lord Treasurer or the Secretary of State.¹ Drayton's "Polyolbion" must have incurred suspicion for some reason, for it seems to have needed the sanction of four licensers.²

It is, however, obvious that the task of controlling the press was not limited to the supervision of the number of presses and the licensing of books. Other very important functions were the suppression of unauthorized writings, or such as had been licensed without due caution, and the detection of offending utterances; nor were the powers of the authorities limited to the suppression of the printed book; in the case of disobedience to regulations, fine and imprisonment, sometimes even banishment or death, were inflicted.

Works of theology, sermons, etc.—books most open to the charge of heresy—do not fall within the scope of the present enquiry; nor do the pamphlets of the Martin Marprelate controversy in 1588—1590, since they were written for purely controversial ends. It is sufficient to note that the secret press from which they were issued was tracked with the utmost determination, and finally captured; and that, of those implicated in these publications, one died in prison and one was hanged.

Other proofs of the activity of the authorities in suppressing supposed heretical writings may be found in the fact that for thirty-five years the Puritan Cartwright's "Confutation of the Rhemish Testament" was kept from the press, in spite of repeated efforts to obtain

1. "Transcript," Vol. ii, pp. 502, 504. (Oct. 14, Oct. 23, 1588.)

2. "Transcript," iii, 477. (7th Feb., 1611-12.)

permission to print it;¹ in spite, too, of its being a work undertaken with the encouragement of Leicester and Walsingham. Magdalen College, Oxford, was required, upon one occasion, in 1568, to search for "superstitious books," and send those found to the Court of High Commission.² Still more noteworthy, as evidence of ecclesiastical rigour, is the suppression, in 1591, *after* license and publication, of a harmless metrical version of the Psalms, called a "Harmony of the Church," by Michael Drayton.³ Selden was summoned in 1618 before the Court of High Commission, because, in his learned book on "Tithes," he was thought to have weakened the ecclesiastical claim of "Divine right." He was severely threatened and obliged to sign a form of apology for the publication, and the book was suppressed.⁴ Henry Gellibrand, Professor of Astronomy at Gresham College, was called before the same Court, because, in an almanac he published for the year 1631, he had substituted for the names of saints and apostles, those of martyrs recorded by Foxe. He was, however, acquitted.⁵ Nor was the activity of the authorities limited to the cognisance of published literature. In the Star Chamber, Sir John Yorke and others were indicted for permitting and seeing the performance of an interlude in which a priest was represented as victorious in argument over an English minister. It was regarded as "a play in prophanation of religion." Yorke and his wife were fined £1,000 each, and others of the audience £300!⁶

Political topics were even more risky. The most innocent allusion to current politics was tabooed by a government which knew itself to be menaced by secret enemies on every side. This pardonable uneasiness

1. D. N. B. Arber, "Transcript," iv, 27-28.

2. J. S. Burn. "The Court of High Commission," 1865, p. 20.

3. D. N. B. The title of this suppressed edition was "The Triumphs of the Church."

4. J. S. Burn. "The Court of High Commission," 1865, p. 37.

5. D. N. B. J. S. Burn, *ut supra*, p. 61.

6. Hist. MSS. Comm. iii, App., pp. 62-3. MSS. of the Duke of Northumberland. (July 1st, 1614.)

explains, if it does not excuse, the policy which proscribed certain Irish passages in Holinshed's "History of England" (1577), ordering that the offending pages should be cancelled and replaced by others.¹ Numerous were the publications which brought trouble upon writer and publisher on the score of suspected politics. Parson's daring treatise on the Succession, advocating the claims of the Infanta (1594), is the most flagrant instance of interference in State questions, and it is not surprising that the Government took strong measures against it. It was high treason even to possess a copy of this.² But the nature of the political opinions expressed was not the sole ground of condemnation; the offence lay in publishing any opinions upon matters which the Crown considered out of the legitimate range of the subject's criticism. Any expression of views upon current politics was liable to be construed as a "lewd libel," causing condign punishment to be meted out to the author. Thus in 1582 a certain Vallinger (? Stephen) was fined £100, imprisoned, and pilloried for the authorship of certain "libels" against government and religion.³ And in 1599, when John Stubbes and the publisher Page brought out a pamphlet against the French marriage then apparently projected by the Queen, they were condemned to have the right hand struck off, according to the barbarous Elizabethan custom, by a blow from a butcher's knife.

These, however, were publications written avowedly on political topics, by men conscious that they ran the risk of severe penalties. It was otherwise with many publications, innocent in intention, but suspected by the authorities of hidden political allusions. It is perhaps intelligible that an attempt should have been made to suppress Raleigh's "History of the World," written during his imprisonment. James I considered that it

1. D. N. B.

2. T. G. Law. "Essays and Reviews" (1904), p. 140.

3. Burn "Court of High Commission" (1865), p. 75.

was "too saucy in censuring princes."¹ But there are instances of perfectly innocent academic works falling under the ban. Drama was especially open to suspicion, as offering exceptional chances of working upon popular feeling. During the last years of the life of the turbulent favourite Essex, and those immediately following his execution, the authorities were unusually sensitive. Jonson's "Sejanus" and Daniel's "Philotas" both brought trouble upon their authors, being construed as expressions of sympathy with Essex. It is difficult to understand why the Lord Chamberlain's Company should have been let off without punishment for an offence much more real. The night before Essex's conspiracy in 1601, they revived, at the request of the conspirators, Shakspeare's "Richard II."; the object being, beyond doubt, to arouse public sympathy. The players were interrogated, and it was proved that the performance was by request; yet it does not appear that they suffered for their temerity.² On the other hand, Sir John Hayward, for an incautious dedication to Essex of a history of the last years of Richard II., was imprisoned and threatened with torture.³ That there was a special risk in the publication of work likely to give offence seems clear from the omission, in the "Richard II" Quartos of 1597 and 1598, of the deposition scene.

But, alas, for writers and publishers, the list of dangerous topics did not end with religion and politics. Hidden snares lay around every conceivable subject. No writer must so much as glance at the character of any great man. In Sir J. Smith's "Discourse on the Forms and Effects of divers sorts of Weapons" (1590), he speaks rather plainly about "a few private men, whom almost the whole realm doth greatly blame for their detestable disorders and cruelties." The book was in consequence suppressed, and there is extant a letter of

1. D. N. B.

2. S. Lee. "Life of Shakspeare" (1898), p. 175-6.

3. See D. N. B. and Mr. Plomer's article in "The Library," vol. iii, p. 13 *sqq.* (New Series).

remonstrance, written by Smith to Cecil, complaining bitterly of the injustice, in that "a few of our such men of war, being so notoriously known . . . should carry so much credit to procure in their own behalfs . . . the extinguishing of a little book that doth reproach none, but such as through their guilty consciences will needs . . . discover themselves."¹

Nothing might be published which could conceivably injure the interests of any one powerful enough to retaliate. Dr. Giles Fletcher's book of "The Russe Commonwealth" (1591) was considered likely to do harm to the trade of the Muscovy Company, as it censured rather severely the Russian Government. The Company procured its suppression.²

Even personal disputes between writers so unimportant as poverty-stricken Tom Nash, and the pedant Gabriel Harvey, were not to be tolerated by the authorities.

During the last decade of Elizabeth's reign (the first decade of Shakspeare's public career) the press seems to have been particularly feared and hampered by government. This was owing partly to dreaded intrigues, centring round the succession question, partly to the autocratic character of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Whitgift, and of his co-adjutor Bancroft, Bishop of London. Not content with rigorous suppression of religious and political topics, they exercised at this time a specially severe censorship over satirical publications dealing with social abuses. There was, perhaps, special cause for this, for the output of coarse satire was, during the years before 1600, exceptionally large. Whitgift determined to repress the dangerous tendency to criticise, and on 1st June, 1599, issued an order for the suppression and burning of no less than seven satirical works,³ three books of alleged immoral tendencies (including Marlowe's "Ovid"), and all the quarrelsome pamphlets of

1. Camden Soc., "Letters of Eminent Literary Men," 1843, p. 60.

2. Camden Soc., "Letters of Eminent Literary Men," 1843, pp. 76-79.

3. They included the satires of Hall, Marston, and Guilpin, and epigrams of Davies.

Harvey and Nash. It was forbidden to print hereafter "any satires or epigrams," and any book by Harvey or Nash.¹ It was not until 1613, after the death of Whitgift and Bancroft, that satirical writing was again ventured upon by that daring free-lance, George Wither, in his "Abuses stript and whipt." He had, even then, good cause to repent of his temerity, for the outcome was a rigorous imprisonment.²

Satire was particularly likely to give offence, on account of its coarseness, as well as its freedom in criticism. Though the Elizabethan age was outspoken and unrefined, some attempt was made now and again to check literature of openly immoral tendencies. To modern taste, the judgment of the censors was at times strangely at fault, both in its condemnation and its tacit permission. That certain books and pamphlets should have been permitted free circulation, when Nash's and Harvey's comparatively harmless recriminations were condemned, would afford matter for some surprise did we not know how much more urgent was felt to be the preservation of order than the regulation of morals.

The efforts at supervision of literary morals were, at best, spasmodic and ineffective; each instance seems to stand alone, as an accidental thing. While the Stationers' Register records the licensing of hundreds of ballads, many undoubtedly thoroughly evil in tendency, there is at least one instance of a ballad being stayed until "the undecentness be reformed," and finally rejected.³

There is on record also an interesting order issued from the Privy Council to the Universities in 1593, forbidding them to allow "common plaiers" to resort thither, upon the definitely moral ground that many of their interludes and "plaies" are "full of lewde

1. Arber. "Transcript," iii, 677.

2. See F. Sidgwick's introduction to his edition of Wither.

3. "Transcript," ii, 576, 7th March, 1590-91.

example," and most of them full of "vanitie."¹ But interference of this kind is exceptional.

The delays to which some books were subjected by the custom of licensing were often most vexatious and harmful. Philip Stubbes complains that they were often kept waiting three months, sometimes as much as two or three years—and probably after all might meet with a refusal.² Such uncertainty must have seriously affected the author's chance of selling his manuscript, while the alterations and cancellings often required by the authorities after printing must have greatly reduced the publisher's profit, and consequently the payment of authors.

Since offences against State and Church were, as was inevitable, sought out with much greater vigilance than offences against mere morality and decency, we are not surprised at Philip Stubbes' complaint that serious works met with much greater difficulty in procuring a license than writings less worthy, or even morally vicious. He is thinking, no doubt, of Greene's later pamphlets, when he angrily asserts that books "full of all filthiness, scurrilitie, bawdry, dissoluteness, cosenage, conney-catching, and the like . . . are either quickly licensed, or at least easilie tolerate without all denial or contradiction whatever."³

There was thus, in the later years of Elizabeth, and under James, very strict supervision of printed literature. And yet—such was the irrepressible activity of authors and stationers—this rigorous discipline was not entirely successful. Forbidden books *were* bought and sold. Suppression made the demand for them more keen, though it must, of necessity, have limited the sale. We know that, when Government had ordered the suppression of Raleigh's "History of the World," it continued

1. Acts of the Privy Council (ed. J. R. Dasent), vol. xxiv, p. 427 (29 July, 1593).

2. "Motive to Good Works," 1593. Quoted in preface to "Anatomy of Abuses" (New Shaks. Soc.), p. 69*.

3. *Ibid.*

to be sold, without the title-page.¹ Rowland's suppressed "Letting of Humour's Blood in the Head Vein" (1600) was secretly republished, without date, under the title of "Humour's Ordinary";² and twenty-eight booksellers were fined for dealing in the book after it had been forbidden.³ Nash got some productions published after the prohibition in 1599, though it is true that none of the Harvey-Nash pamphlets were reprinted, and that neither antagonist dared to reopen the quarrel. Moreover, dangerously unlawful, seditious books were set forth, scaring law-abiding citizens who might chance to meet with one. Lord Edward Windsor had such a book sent to him by post. "After he had read it," it was timorously explained, "he never spake with any of it, nor showed it unto any, but has kept it to himself."⁴

The most daring exploit of the age in printing was that carried out by certain Jesuit priests, who in 1581 secretly prepared four hundred copies of a work by Edmund Campion, and scattered them in St. Mary's Church, before the *Encaenia* at Oxford.⁵

Wither goes so far as to bring a very serious accusation against some of the leading members of the Stationers' Company in his day. He asserts that they took advantage of their official position; "those bookes which they have taken from others as unlawfull, have been divulged againe by some in office among them for their private commodity . . . they have solde those books which to their knowledge contain matter injurious to the King and Prince." "To this passe it is already come that whatsoever the State dislyke shall be imprinted and divulged by them (though both absurd and scandalous) with twice more seriousness than any booke lawfully commanded." . . .⁶

1. D. N. B.

2. Rowland's "Works," ed. Rimbault. Percy Soc., vol. ix, Introduction.

3. Arber. "Transcript," ii, 832.

4. Cal. MS. Hatfield, v, 53.

5. D. N. B. See article by T. C. on Edmund Campion. [The *Encaenia* is the annual ceremony at Oxford at which degrees are conferred and prize poems read.]

6. "Scholar's Purgatory" (c. 1624), pp. 34, 111.

Wither was an angry man, but there was doubtless a grain of truth in this. It shows, were illustration needed, that the press shared in the growing tendency towards repudiation of Stuart authority.

(3) *The Stationers' Company* was the incorporated body of persons engaged in the mechanical production and selling of books. They were the successors to the scribes and manuscript sellers of previous centuries, so called because they occupied recognized stations, or stalls, in localities devoted to the trade.

At this period stationers were primarily booksellers, though they might be also printers, publishers, and scribes. They had a trade organization, incorporated in 1557,¹ and confirmed in 1559, and they had power to regulate in detail the printing and selling of books, to decide questions as to ownership, and, in general, to make any regulations considered advisable, so long as not contrary to the law of the land. Except in so far as they acted for the Privy Council and the Court of High Commission, they were concerned chiefly with the regulation of the book trade for their own advantage as a close corporation. They were invested by charter with great powers of supervision, and were in the habit of appointing "searchers" to ascertain any cases of infringement of rules. As the number of printers was not more than twenty-three, and the searchers were as many as twenty-four or twenty-eight, it is clear that the supervision was far from nominal, especially when, as at one time, the search was made weekly. The craft of printing could only be exercised by members of the Company, and by a limited number of them. In case of disobedience to regulations, the officers of the Company could inflict fines, and they could seize and destroy not only printed "copy," but even—a more severe penalty—the type or "letter" itself. One of their main objects was to protect master printers and publishers in their

1. Arber ("Transcript," i, xxiv) dates the incorporation 4th May, 1556; the Charter was enrolled in the City Records on 3rd June, 1557.

rights as proprietors of manuscript or "copy." They kept a register of books and pamphlets published, which they entered to the name of the owner, charging a small fee for registration. If a work were secretly published by another than the stationer to whom it was entered, the Company would take disciplinary measures to protect the property. The register contains repeated instances of the seizure of copies, unlawfully, or—as they phrase it—"disorderly" printed. Thus M. Lawe was fined 20s. for printing "England's Mourning Garment," "being Thomas Millington's copie" (7th June, 1603).

There can be no doubt that at first the register was simply a means of recording permission to print a given work, and the receipt of the regular fee for this permission. To the Company, the main point recorded was the fee; to the stationer, the point lay in the *imprimatur*. Entry was supposed to be compulsory, and it was the only proof of ownership of a book; but stationers appear to have entered, or neglected to enter, at their will. As, however, the officials of the Stationers' Company came to be more and more employed as the instruments of a higher authority, they made it a condition of entry that the book should first have been passed by the Government licensers, and entry thus became itself a proof of conformity to the State regulations. Hence it grew more desirable and more customary always to enter books, unless the publisher were careless or wished to evade notice.

From about 1586 onwards the Stationers' Register forms a fairly complete record of books openly published. Out of fifty-three small pamphlets by Breton, forty are entered. Out of twenty-two different editions of plays by Shakspeare issued between 1597 and 1637 (some of them certainly pirated), rather more than half are entered. Five out of eight works by Philip Stubbes are recorded. The absence of registration is not to be taken as proof of neglect to procure a license, but it suggests it, since it is *prima facie* unlikely that the publisher who had taken the

pains to comply with the licensing regulations should neglect to register with the Company his right to the book.

Other regulations of the Company were designed in the interests of workmen. Such were those limiting the number of apprentices and the kinds of work to be assigned to them; also those fixing a term for the period of apprenticeship, and those limiting the number of copies permitted to be printed in each separate edition. The general effect of these enactments was to keep up the cost of production, and thus indirectly to keep low the payment for manuscripts. Fortunately for authors, they were not artificially restricted in their choice of a publisher. Any one, whether belonging to the Company or not, could take upon himself the risk of publishing a manuscript,¹ provided he could arrange with a printer and bookseller. There was, therefore, competition for the productions of printers who could hit the popular taste.

(4) In the case of acted drama² still another public body of authorities had to be reckoned with, viz., *the Corporation of the City of London*. It was in their capacity as guardians of the public peace, health, and morality, that the City Fathers were concerned with the theatre. The history of their action and its effect upon the fortunes of the stage has been related with such fullness by Mr. Fleay in his "Chronicle History of the London Stage," that it is unnecessary to dwell upon it here. It is sufficient to point out that in this sphere also authority showed itself hostile and repressive, and that the record is one of a series of attempts to prohibit performances, for longer or shorter periods, and to restrict the freedom of playing companies by regulations as to days, hours, number of actors, etc. It was the necessity of evading the persistent hostility of the City

1. Unless, of course, it fell within the class of "privileged" books. See pp. 65, 71.

2. For the facts recorded in this paragraph I am chiefly indebted to Mr. F. G. Fleay's "Chronicle History of the English Stage" and to Dr. Ward's "History of Dramatic Literature."

authorities that drove the companies to withdraw themselves altogether from their jurisdiction by erecting their permanent theatres outside the City bounds.

Curiously, in this one literary domain—the drama—the higher authority, the Privy Council, exercised an influence altogether beneficent and encouraging. In this matter, government policy was dictated by the sympathies of the Court, which were all on the side of a favourite literary recreation. Hence the Privy Council frequently tried to force from the unwilling civic authorities concessions in favour of the theatre. Now it was a “request” for permission for a performance by some great nobleman’s “servants”; now for the re-opening of some playing-place closed by command; now for the redress of particular grievances. The City resisted with great spirit, and retaliated by casting reflections upon the character of the companies and their performances. When forced reluctantly to make concessions, they insisted upon conditions which exploited the actors for the benefit of the City charities. All this relates chiefly, however, to the early history of the Elizabethan stage. With the establishment of regular theatres outside the “liberties of the City,” independence was assured and the hostility of the London Corporation ceased to affect the drama seriously.

In the provinces, the reverse took place. The civic authorities in small country places seem, in the earlier years of Elizabeth’s reign, to have viewed the performances of travelling companies with indifference, or even with beneficent interest. But as puritanical feeling gathered strength throughout the reigns of Elizabeth and James I, it permeated these bodies also, and gradually caused them to adopt towards drama an attitude modelled more closely upon that of the London authorities. Thus, to take the history of Shakspeare’s birthplace, Stratford-on-Avon; in his boyhood travelling players’ companies were welcome and frequent visitors. During the year 1568, while Shakspeare’s father was bailiff, two companies

of players were entertained by the Corporation,¹ and no less than twenty-four troupes performed in the town during the years from 1569 to 1587. But by 1602, opinions (or the membership of the Town Council) had undergone such an alteration that this body passed a resolution forbidding, under a penalty of ten shillings, the performance of plays in the Guildhall. In 1612 the fine was raised to the large sum of £10.²

The triumph of this hostile policy throughout the country was marked by the famous "Ordinance of the Lords and Commons" on 2nd September, 1642, for the closing of all theatres, and the suppression of all theatrical performances. But the history of the causes, moral and political, which finally brought about this complete overthrow of the stage, belongs to a period later than that with which this present sketch is concerned.

To turn to more general considerations; an unfortunate outcome of the suspicious and censorious attitude of authority towards printed literature was the rise of a class of professional informers, or—to use the Elizabethan terms—"moralisers," and "state decipherers." To judge from the complaints to be met with, these informers only began to cause serious trouble some time after the Government had made clear, by the decree of 1586, its general repressive policy. From 1589 onwards we meet with a steady stream of complaints, and it is abundantly evident that professional writers found themselves seriously hampered in their work, and brought

1. S. Lee, "Life of Shakspeare," (1898), p. 11. During the ten years 1558 to 1568, the Mayor and Corporation of Gloucester paid for no less than twelve public performances by various companies of players. It seems to have been usual for them also to provide the scaffold, and to entertain the players at a tavern. Hist. MSS. Comm. XII, App. ix, pp. 468-70.

2. J. O. Halliwell. "The Stratford Records," 17th Dec. 45 Eliz. and 7th Feb. 9 James IV. The form of the prohibition suggests that it is partly due to a growing regard for decency and good order in public meeting-places,—and not entirely to moral scruples. The similar prohibition in the records of the Corporation of Southampton, assigns as a reason the damage done to "tables, benches, and fourmes," so that the court cannot sit "in such decent and convenient order as becometh." Hist. MSS. Comm. XI, App. iii, p. 28 (6th Feb., 1623).

into considerable danger, by the malicious activity of these men. Authors, says Nash, are like men at Persian banquets; "if they rowle their eye never so little at one side, there stands an Eunuch before them, with his heart full of jealousie, and his bowe ready bent to shoote them through, because they looke farther than the lawes of the country suffer them."¹ "Application is now grown a trade," grumbles Jonson.²

The simplest expression would be construed by these informers as bearing some sinister meaning. "Let me but name bread," cries Nash, "and they will interpret it to be the town of Breda in the Low Countreys."³ If the unlucky writer, driven by necessity to write in haste, neglects to explain and qualify as carefully as he would, "out steps me an infant squib of the Inns of Court, catcheth hold of a rush and absolutely concludeth it is meant for the Emperor of Russia, and that it will utterly marre the trafficke into that country if all the Pamphlets be not called in and suppressed, wherein that libelling word is mentioned."⁴ These "decipherers" made it their trade to interpret names as disguises for great personages thereby libelled; and they were but too successful in arousing these exalted ones to set on foot prosecutions without sufficiently careful enquiry. The most far-fetched interpretation of general meaning could bring a writer into trouble, as in the case of Jonson's "Sejanus," and Daniel's well-meant academic "Philotas." Nor, indeed, were all writers so fortunate as these two in being able to clear themselves. To meaner writers, without Court influence, the difficulty and danger were much greater. Breton did not exaggerate when he said:

Who doth not find it by experience
That points and commas, oftentimes misread,
Endanger oft the harmless writer's head?⁵

1. "A Countercuffe." Nash. "Works," ed. Grosart, i, 84.

2. "Volpone" Dedication. (Printed 1607.)

3. "Christ's Teares." "Works," iv, 5. Dedication to edition of 1594.

4. "Lenten Stuffle." "Works," v, 288-9.

5. "No Whipping, but a Tripping" (?) Breton. See "Works," ed. Grosart, i, 32.

An author's credit is "unreprievedly lost" if these "politicians" once begin to call his innocence in question. They have practised "deciphering" until it has become a regular system. They buy forbidden books in the hope of detecting clues; they meet and confer together, conning the catalogues of publications, and enquiring after new books at the taverns; they use every art that ingenuity can suggest in order to fasten accusations upon unlucky authors.¹ Theirs is, indeed, as writers complain with justice, "a most lewde and detestable" profession. They keep princes in perpetual misgiving, "upon the least wagging of a strawe to put them in feare where no feare is." And all this is done in the merely sordid hope of reward for their pains.²

The severity of the punishments inflicted upon writers unable to prove their innocence was extreme. Any utterance construed as a reflection upon political topics was apt to be regarded as seditious and treasonable, and to be accused of these offences was to be liable, before conviction, to imprisonment and torture. On 11th May, 1593, an order was issued by the Privy Council to search for the author and publisher of certain supposed seditious placards. If the suspected persons should refuse to confess the truth, the order ran, "you shall by authority hereof put them to torture in Bridewell, and by the extremity thereof . . . draw them to discover their knowledge."³ The rack and the scavenger's daughter were used for the torturing of Alexander Briant, to induce him to confession about a secret press.⁴ Similar orders were not infrequently issued by the Star Chamber; indeed, in 1620, this Court had already attained much notoriety for its vigilance and arbitrary severity. As John Chamberlain reported, in a private letter of this

1. Jonson, "Epigrams," No. 92. Works, ed. Gifford (1816), vol. viii, p. 203.

2. Nash, "Lenten Stuffe." "Works," v, 298.

3. Acts of the Privy Council," (ed. J. R. Dasent), vol. xxiv, p. 222 (11th May, 1593).

4. T. G. Law, "Essays and Reviews," (1904), p. 48.

date, "the world is now much terrified with the Star Chamber."¹

No wonder that writers constantly betrayed a nervous apprehension of the informer. They did their best to forestall him by assertions of innocence, and they guarded against his malice, wherever possible, by engaging the patronage of some exalted personage. The playwright warns his audience against interpreting as a "libel" what he had written as a "play";² he protests against the "state-decipherer or politic pick-lock"; who would search out with ridiculous solemnity "who was meant by the gingerbread woman, . . . or what concealed statesman by the seller of mouse traps."³ Nash warns off those who would pry into a supposed hidden meaning in "Summer's Last Will and Testament." "Deep reaching wits, here is no deep streame for you to angle in. Moralisers, you that wrest a never-meant meaning out of every thing, applying all things to the present time, keepe your attention for the common stage, for here are no quips in characters for you to reade."⁴ He had reason to take precautionary measures; he had already suffered severely, for the most frivolous accusations had been used against him by the fraternity of informers; they had even wrested an innocent phrase out of "Piers Penniles"—"I pray you, how might I call you?"—into an attack upon one of themselves, named Howe,—of whom the writer had never heard before!⁵ But he had had more grievous cause than this to regret the existence of "decipherers." For the authorship of a play—"The Isle of Dogs"—in which some real or fancied offence had been detected, he had been imprisoned, and banished from London—where alone a professional writer could hope to exist!

1. John Chamberlain, "Letters" (1620). Quoted by C. L. Scofield in "Study of the Court of Star Chamber," p. 49.

2. Jonson, "Epicoene" (second Prologue).

3. Jonson, "Bartholomew Fair." Introduction.

4. "Summer's Last Will . . ." Nash, "Works," ed. Grosart, vi, 88 (Prologue).

5. "Piers Penniles." Nash. "Works," ii, 7. [Or is this passage another of Nash's mystifications?]

It was all very well for writers to outface the informers. Jonson took this line. He warned them, at the performance of "Every Man out of his Humour" that he defied "them and their writing tables." But he had to answer to the Privy Council for "Sejanus"; he had to omit his Prologue to the "Poetaster"; he was forced to suppress his "The Devil is an Ass," and he suffered imprisonment, together with Chapman and Marston, for "Eastward Hoe." We have no means of knowing how rigorous was their imprisonment; but we know from George Wither that his own punishment later was no empty form. He was confined in solitude, allowed to see no friends, forbidden to write, and refused the allowance of food allotted to "close" prisoners. Sometimes for twenty-four hours together he was locked up "without so much as a drop of water" to cool his tongue. When very ill, he was denied either physician or apothecary.¹

Writers of solid and learned works fared little better than the playwright. We have seen to what loss and annoyance Holinshed was subjected; John Stowe's self-sacrificing zeal in the collection of documents illustrative of the history of his country met with scant encouragement from the authorities. He was brought before the Privy Council on the charge of having in his possession a copy of Alva's manifesto against Queen Elizabeth (1568); and again, in 1570, was called before the Court of High Commission.² He seems to have escaped punishment; but the annoyance and risk must have been calculated to deter a man of weaker spirit. Nor was his a unique experience. W. S[tafford], writing in 1581, complained bitterly of the number of learned men harassed during the previous thirty years, simply for "declaring their opinions in things that have arisen in controversy." He asks pertinently who is likely to "have any courage to study," "seeinge, insteede of honour and preference, dishonour, and hindrance recom-

1. Wither. "Scholar's Purgatory," c. 1624, p. 3.

2. S. Lee in D. N. B.

pensed for a rewarde of learning.”¹ Still more striking, perhaps, is the testimony of Bishop Goodman, that he would have written some reply to Bacon’s “Advancement of Learning” (1603), if he “durst have printed it.”²

It is certain that writers were intimidated, and that some were reduced to silence. Art was, as Shakspeare lamented, “made tongue-tied by authority.”³ Those to whom writing was almost the only source of income, at times suffered greatly; Nash declares that for a twelvemonth he published nothing for fear of censure.⁴ Necessity, and his own inclination, drove him back again to the press—with what unfortunate result we have already seen. The list of writers who suffered from the interference of the authorities includes Cartwright, Chapman, Daniel, Dekker, Drayton, Fletcher, Hayward, Holinshed, Jonson, Kyd, Lodge, Marlowe, Marston, Middleton, Munday, Nash, Rowlands, Selden, Shakspeare, Smith, Stowe, Stubbes, and Wither. In every sphere of writing the baneful effect of Government repression is seen. Writers of history, in verse or prose, were driven to passing lightly over any incidents and speeches which might be made to bear an evil construction. Thus Drayton, while reciting the reasons urged for the deposition of Edward II., gives a cautious apology for his temerity.

Much more he spake; but fain would I be short
To this intent a speech delivering.
Nor may I be too curious to report
What toucheth the deposing of a king.

1. W. S., “Compendious Examination,” 1581. “New Shaks. Soc.,” vol. iii, series vi (1876), p. 27.

2. Bishop Goodman, “Court of James I,” ed. 1839, i, p. 283.

3. Sonnet lxvi: The earlier editions of “Richard II” omit the deposition scene, a scene upon which Shakspeare had lavished all his powers.

4. Prologue to “Summer’s Last Will and Testament,” (1600). “Works,” vi, 87. It is just possible that Nash is referring here chiefly to *literary* censure.

Wherefore, I warn thee, Muse, not to exhort
 The after times to this forbidden thing
 By reason for it by the Bishop laid,
 Or from my feeling what he might have said.¹

More noteworthy, however, than the curbing of Drayton's somewhat exuberant muse, is the influence exerted by the same fear upon the character of Spenser's greatest poem. Without the dread of authority before him, he might never have written of his imaginary Faery Land; he expressly states that he chose the legendary age of Arthur as "furthest from the danger of envy, and suspicion of the present time . . . for avoiding of jealous opinions and misconstructions."² When we note how largely, in spite of this, his interest is centred upon the great figures of his own age, we are led to wonder whether English Literature may not have been deprived, by a suspicious Government, of a great epic based upon contemporary national history! A worse result was however, the discredit into which malicious "moralisers" brought the whole profession of literature. "Men's study of depravation and calumny" tended to diminish the credit of all writers, "making the age afraid of their liberty" and causing all writing to be regarded as "aspersion."³ The suspicion of the ignorant towards the scholar is sarcastically represented in the "Pilgrimage to Parnassus." "Well, remember . . . what I say: schollers are pryed into of late, and are founde to bee busye fellows, disturbers of the peace. Ile say no more."⁴

We have not noticed the terrible risks run by the unwary talker—these were incurred by the writer only in so far as they were incurred by every man in the nation. But it is impossible to close a chapter dealing with the dangers to which the literary man was liable without

1. Baron's "Wars," 1596, v, 9. In the first edition of the poem, "Mortimeriados," he did not dare to suggest any reasons at all.

2. Letter to Raleigh, prefixed to "Faery Queene."

3. Jonson. "Discoveries," Works, ed. Gifford, (1816), Vol. ix, p. 232.

4. "Parnassus Plays" (1597—1601), ed. W. D. Macray (1886), p. 120.

allusion to the fate from which Marlowe was, probably, only saved by death in another form. When he was suddenly cut off by the dagger of the serving-man, Francis Archer, he was fleeing from a warrant issued by the Privy Council, summoning him to trial for the utterance of heretical opinions. A paper of information from one of the "State decipherers" lay before the Council, accusing him of heresy and blasphemy, and of receiving seditious and libellous books.¹ The unfortunate Kyd had been subjected to torture on account of an unorthodox paper found amongst his own, but stated by him to have been the property of Marlowe; and it is possible that his statement had led to the issue of the warrant.²

For opinions similar to those reported of Marlowe, a fellow undergraduate of his had, four years before, been burnt to death at Norwich !³

1. Harl. MS. 6853, fol. 520. Harl. MS. 7042 (see S. L. in D. N. B.).

2. Article by F. Boas, on Marlowe and Kyd in "Fortnightly Review," Feb., 1899.

3. Bullen, introduction to Marlowe's "Works" (1885).

CHAPTER III.

AUTHORS AND PUBLISHERS.

"To disparage the whole profession were an act neither becoming an honest man to do, nor a prudent auditory to suffer While they did like fleas but suck now and then a drop of the writer's blood from him it was somewhat tolerable, but since they began to feed on him, like the third Plague of Egypt, without removing I say , , , it is high time to seek a remedy,"

WITHER, "Scholar's Purgatory" (c. 1624), pp. 9-11.

THE man who had a manuscript to dispose of would, in Elizabethan days, bend his steps first of all to St. Paul's Churchyard. There were to be found all the best booksellers' shops and stalls;¹ and if, as was usual, he had no very definite connection with any particular bookseller, he would hawk his manuscript from one to the other until he had made the best bargain within his power. Some of these stationers were printers also; other printers had no booksellers' shops, and simply worked for stationers; or if they brought books out on their own account, employed stationers to sell for them. If the owner of a manuscript preferred to treat direct with the printer he would have to go to some other part of the city, for printing offices were, for the most part, situated on less valuable sites than the Churchyard.

It was practically impossible to dispose of a manuscript outside London. There were, it is true, stationers in one

1. Dekker, "Lanthorn and Candlelight," 1609, Ded.

or two of the larger towns;¹ but they were, for the most part, only booksellers, not publishers. All printing was by law confined to London since 1556, and a provincial publisher would have found it impossible to deal satisfactorily with printers in London.² The only exceptions were the printing presses of Oxford and Cambridge, and one permitted to a Dutch refugee in Norwich, Antony de Solemne.³ But the former printed very few works of general literature, and the latter scarcely anything but Dutch, for his fellow-refugees. Thus it is clear that the professional writer was almost forced by the exigencies of his profession to live in London, where alone he could find an adequate market.

(As for the choice to be made of a publisher, in many cases the writer had no choice at all. The system of monopolies favoured by Elizabeth had invaded the publishing trade, and many books, and classes of books, were "privileged" or patented to particular booksellers as their sole right.

Thus books on the Common Law might be published by R. Tottel or his successor only; Dictionaries must be brought out by H. Binneman; Primers and Psalters were the monopoly of W. Seres; Latin Grammar books must be entrusted to T. Marsh; almanacs and prognostications to J. Roberts and R. Watkyns, and so on.⁴

Fortunately for the writer on general current topics, these patents referred for the most part to educational books, religion, law, and the dead languages; in *belles lettres* a wide choice of publishers was left open to him. Certain stationers had, however, a reputation for particular kinds of books, and he would consider this in offering his manuscript for sale.

For a work of erudition and importance—likely, perhaps, to be expensive in production—it would be well to

1. See list in Arber's "Transcript of the Stationers' Register," vol. v, lii.

2. See "Bibliographica," ii, 45 (New Series).

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 150-154.

4. See list in Arber's "Transcript," vol. ii, 15-16.

open negotiations with Christopher Barker, or his son and successor, Richard. Barker was printer in English to the Queen, owned a number of printing presses, and was willing now and then to risk an adventurous enterprise, if interested in the work. He at one time nearly ruined himself by the heavy costs he incurred in printing expensive Bibles. Failing Christopher Barker, George Bishop might be approached. He was particularly interested in learned work, especially in theological controversy. For one work of this nature he is known to have maintained the learned Dr. Fulke and two men, with their horses, for nine months, and paid the former £40 (£200), besides bearing the expenses of printing.¹

There was, besides, John Day, a man not very popular with his fellows, being too highly favoured by the great. He was under the special protection of Archbishop Parker, for whom he sometimes printed privately at Lambeth.² He had it in his power, no doubt, to bring suitable books under the notice of the Archbishop. But such notice was, perhaps, too risky to be greatly coveted. Day published Foxe's "Book of Martyrs."

For foreign books, and translations from Continental languages, and from Latin, the most likely publisher was John Wolfe; but, indeed, Wolfe would undertake anything if it promised gain. He was the son of Reyner Wolfe, a native of Strasburg settled as publisher in London, and must have inherited a large printing connection from his wealthy father. He was an active man, kept a number of presses, and published very largely, perhaps more than any other. His special line was, however, foreign and dead languages, a line in which he met with some rivalry from Blount. His commercial keenness is illustrated by some of his entries in the Stationers' Registers. Here is an instance. Marlowe died in June, 1593; in September John Wolfe registered his "Hero and Leander," and his translation of "Lucan,"—

1. Article on Arber's "Transcript," in "The Times," Jan. 5, 1877.

2. "Bibliographica," ii, 155 (New Series).

to secure the right, no doubt. He did not publish then, perhaps had not even secured a copy; and they were only brought out, one in 1598 and the other in 1600, by other publishers. He even entered a description of Elizabeth's State Entry into London before the procession took place,¹ thus more than anticipating modern journalistic methods.

The owner of a manuscript of genuine literary value in the more ambitious fields of *belles lettres*, would no doubt apply to Edward Blount, William Ponsonby, or, failing them, to Nicholas Lyngge or Cuthbert Burby. The first was a genuine lover of literature, with discriminating and generous taste. The list of his publications does him the greatest possible credit, including as it does works by Sir W. Alexander, Camden, Cervantes, Sir W. Cornwallis, Daniel, Earle, Florio, Jonson, Lyly, Marlowe, Sylvester, and the great Shakspeare Folio of 1623. He was a true friend, moreover, to one poet at least; daring, when all vilified the character of the dead Marlowe, to publish his work with a striking prefatory note, indicative of genuine personal affection, and desire to do justice to his genius.²

No less worthy was William Ponsonby—in fact, he was probably a publisher higher in public esteem and more entirely scrupulous than Blount. Ponsonby's connection was largely with the more aristocratic among writers; and he was evidently sufficiently prosperous to be able to disdain the publication of such small ware as ballads and catchpenny pamphlets. It was to him that Spenser entrusted the publication of the "Faery Queen" and other poems; he figures in the Stationers' Register as the publisher of all Sidney's writings; he brought out the works of Sidney's sister, the Countess of Pembroke; and the list of his productions includes a translation of Guicciardini, and one of Plutarch.

1. "Transcript," vol. ii, p. 506 (14 Nov., 1588).

2. Ded. preface by Edward Blount to edition of "Hero and Leander," 1598. Malone believed the preface to date, probably, from 1593, the year of Marlowe's death.

But a man of such reputation was of little use to struggling, unknown writers, who must hit the popular taste, even at the sacrifice of dignity. Ponsonby published two of Greene's earliest pamphlets, written in the fashionable euphuistic style; but he published no more for Greene. Nash, Dekker, Breton, if they applied to him, applied in vain. Nor was he the man to buy the manuscripts of popular dramas, authorized or not; in drama he preferred such more "correct" works as Samuel Brandon's "Virtuous Octavia."

Ponsonby was, however, an exception among publishers. Few could resist the bait of a fair text of a popular play, and most were too poor, or too greedy, to be above accepting the ever saleable ballad, almanac, and pamphlet.

Among stationers whose names figure largely in the issues of plays were Thomas Thorpe, Andrew Wise, and James Roberts. Wise showed a discriminating appreciation of the market value, at least, of Shakspeare's plays; out of nine books entered by him during seven years no fewer than five are Shakspeare plays. James Roberts brought out the "Merchant of Venice," and "Midsummer Night's Dream," and entered copies of "Hamlet" and "Troilus and Cressida." As for Thomas Thorpe—best known as the unauthorized publisher of Shakspeare's "Sonnets"—he brought out plays by Jonson, Chapman, and Marston.

For the lower forms of literature—ballads, catchpenny pamphlets, and such—John Danter was the printer most popular. He was evidently rather poor and struggling, glad to print for other stationers, and glad to get hold of popular things, cheap to buy and produce, and readily saleable. The list of publications licensed to him includes a large number of ballads. But—perhaps because he was a publisher of no great reputation, and anxious above all things to catch the popular taste,—he proved very useful to certain struggling, needy pamphlet writers. He published for Greene in his later, sensational days;

he was a good friend to Nash during his acrimonious quarrel with Harvey, which, no doubt, brought Danter as publisher considerable profit. Nor does he, in spite of dealing with somewhat sensational literature, seem to have been more unscrupulous than other publishers in stealing what he could lay hands on. He was quite as ready to publish the sensationally religious tract as the frankly secular broadside; both appealed to his class of reader.

Thomas Creede and the Jaggards (father and son) were publishers of medium reputation, able to undertake the publication of serious work, but not anything involving really heavy expense, and, like John Wolfe, willing to print anything likely to sell. Creede's judgment was not so good as that of some of his fellows, or else he was peculiarly unfortunate in the manuscripts offered to him; for among the seventy-four books licensed to him, there are only about five which are now known to the ordinary student of literature, and three of these only through their connection with works by Shakspeare.

William Jaggard was the object of an angry attack by Heywood in his "Apology for Actors," as a most careless and impudent printer. Jaggard had printed without permission poems of Heywood's and also of Shakspeare's; and Heywood declared that the latter "was much offended with M. Jaggard." By a curious irony, it was this very printer who, in 1623, printed and published with Blount the First Shakspeare Folio, the authorized monument to his fame.

The above-mentioned publishers and printers include, of course, only a small number of the stationers in London. Many more might be mentioned, from Burby, with a large, flourishing, respectable business, down to Hodgets the bookseller, whose registered publications during nineteen years are only twenty-four. As has been seen, the number of printers was strictly limited; but any one of the Stationers' Company could

publish a book if he could get a printer for it and a bookseller.

The matter of "book privileges" has already been referred to. Though of the utmost importance in the history of the book trade, and though necessarily affecting writers, as tending to lower the prices paid for work by limiting competition amongst publishers, their effect upon the literary professional was only indirect. They rendered the struggle for existence more arduous to the unprivileged publisher, by placing beyond his reach most of the books for which there was a steady, large demand, and thus indirectly brought about a spirit of unscrupulous rapacity which regarded any manuscript, however obtained, as fair booty. Further, by keeping the majority of the stationers in chronic poverty, these "privileges" or "patents" reduced the possibilities of fair remuneration to the author for such manuscripts as were openly bought. That book traders, as a class, suffered serious injury cannot be disputed. More than twenty-three monopolies were granted under Elizabeth—nearly all of them for whole classes of books. Long and bitter struggles were carried on between the privileged few and the many. Constant complaints were made by the monopolists concerning secret infringements of their rights, and from about 1582 to 1586 there was an organized conspiracy against them. It was headed by the irrepressible John Wolfe (who had begun to publish only a few years before), and an active agent of his was a certain poor printer, Roger Ward. They, with others, deliberately printed large editions of privileged books and parts of books; and they appealed to Burleigh, and employed legal advisers to fight out the matter. The situation was unbearable, they declared; nothing was left for the unprivileged stationer but "ballets and toys." In the end they gained something. Certain privileges were relinquished by rich stationers to the Company as a whole, in order to provide work for the most needy (though there was great complaint of the workmanship

later on), and the commissioners for the inquiry framed some very sensible regulations designed to mitigate the grievances (1583). In the following year still more book privileges were resigned, and the evil was further dealt with in the Great Star Chamber Decree of 1586.¹

Many years later, however, things were not much mended. The books resigned to the Company by monopolists, for the benefit of poor members, had gradually come to be regarded as the property of the ruling stationers, by whom the younger and poorer were oppressed. "You would think it were insufferable," said Wither, describing their grievances. Printers especially suffered injustice. While the selling-prices of many books had, owing to the monopolies, almost doubled,² the printers' charges were by enactment kept low; so that they toiled simply to enrich men favoured by privileges.³

From the general "trade" point of view, then, book patents were a source of great injustice; from the point of view of the public, and of writers as a class, there is still less to be said for them. Their effect was to render necessary books dear and scarce, to the great injury of education and learning. The upholders of privileges urged that, by enriching certain stationers, patents rendered possible the production of very expensive works of erudition, upon which otherwise no stationer would venture.⁴ And they pointed to Barker's expensive folio Bibles, and to the great editions of More's Works, and Grafton's Chronicle, brought out by Richard Tottel (with other printers). But the facts do not quite bear out the contention that patents were necessary for this reason, for most of the more adventurous publications were, after all, brought out by syndicates of unprivileged publishers. Thus the Shakspeare Folio of 1623, the

1. Arber, "Transcript," vol. ii, 753-793; vol. i, 116, 144.

2. "Scintilla." See Arber, "Transcript," vol. iv (1641), 35-8.

3. "Scholar's Purgatory," (c. 1624), pp. 109-110.

4. Arber, "Transcript," ii, 805.

Holinshed Folio of 1577, the translation of the "moral works" of Plutarch, and Drayton's "Polyolbion," were all produced by "unprivileged" stationers. It was by no means infrequent for wealthy citizens to help to bear the expense of producing works in which they were interested. John Bodenham almost certainly bore the cost of the Anthologies connected with his name—"England's Parnassus," "England's Helicon," and others. Thomas Heywood's "Hierarchy of Angels" is adorned with a number of elaborate full-page engravings dedicated to various generous friends by whom the cost of them was borne.¹

In the case of works of erudition and controversy payments to authors seem to have been on a sufficiently generous scale, as we have seen in the case of George Bishop's payments for Dr. Fulke's "Confutation of the Rhemish Testament." The six final revisers of the Authorized Version of the Bible received each thirty shillings (equivalent to £7. 10s. in present money) per week.²

For the catchpenny pamphlet, or the small volume of (so-called) poetry, the regular payment was forty shillings, with, perhaps, a pottle of wine.³ Writers of popular reputation could no doubt reckon upon a good deal more—perhaps double the sum. Nash swears that he will be paid dear for his pains;⁴ Greene's pamphlets were in great demand; and the "Parnassus Plays" represent John Danter, the best-known publisher of such wares, offering to raise his fee of forty shillings to "anything," upon learning that an offered manuscript is a libel.⁵

1. This custom lasted at least until the time of Dryden's "Virgil."

2. "Transcript," iv, p. 12.

3. "Parnassus Plays, ed. Macray, p. 89. Wither, "Scholar's Purgatory," (c. 1620), pp. 115, 130.

4. "Have with you. . ." "Works," ed. Grosart, vol. iii, 189.

5. "Parnassus Plays," p. 89.

For mere hackwork, such as translation, the author sometimes had no money payment at all, only receiving a certain number of copies, to dispose of at as good a price as he could get.¹ Such popular wares sold at two-pence,² threepence, or fourpence; Greene's "Connycatching" sold at threepence.³

They were advertised by nailing or pasting the front page, with an attractive catch-title, on the whipping-posts in the streets, on the pillars in St. Paul's, and on the walls of the Inns of Court, to attract the lawyers and their country clients.⁴ The superior writer objected to advertising. Jonson warns his bookseller that he dislikes to have his poems made known by the

. . . title-leaf on posts or walls
Or in cleft sticks, advanced to make calls
For termers, or some clerk-like serving-man.⁵

Of course a popular pamphlet would run into many editions; Nash's "Piers Penniless" "passed through the pikes of six impressions" in two or three years; and he speaks once of "many thousands" looking for productions from his pen. Wither swears that of his Hymns "20,000 might have been dispersed."⁶ But unless the author supplied new matter—if only a new preface—it is probable that he gained nothing further but fame. Edward Hake expressly states that he receives nothing for the new edition of his "News out of Paul's Church-yard."

1. Article by R. B. McKerrow in "Gentleman's Magazine," April, 1906, on R. Robinson's "Eupolemia." The practice of paying in kind, sometimes the writer's own books only, sometimes also other books obtained in exchange for them by the publisher, prevailed also in Germany. See G. H. Putnam, "Books and their Makers in the Middle Ages," ii, 432-3.

2. Twopenny pamphlets are frequently spoken of.

3. "Defence of Connycatching." See Greene's "Works," ed. Grosart, vol. xi, 45.

4. Hall, "Virgidemiarum VI Libri," Book v, ii, 45.

5. Jonson, "To my Bookseller." "Works," ed. Gifford (1816, vol. viii, p. 154.

6. "Scholar's Purgatory," (n.d.), p. 32.

The time for bringing out new books was the term, when Westminster was thronged with lawyers and clients, and when visitors from the country came up to London to see life. Michaelmas term was the most favourable publishing season, as bringing the most clients.¹ Writers had therefore to get their manuscripts ready for printing well in advance during the summer. Greene handed over his "Orpharion" to the printer during the spring, but, to the author's great disgust, the latter delayed the printing so long that it did not come out until the following spring, a time less favourable than the autumn.²

Most paying to the publisher were Almanacs and Prognostications, having a very large sale, and requiring "few persons and small stock" to print them.³ They were the great resource of the "poorest sort of the Stationers' Company," and great outcry was caused when, in 1588, they were granted as a monopoly to R. Watkins and J. Roberts. It is not likely that very much was to be gained by the authorship of such "toys"; but, if Nash is to be believed, there was enough to induce a poverty-stricken parson brother of Gabriel Harvey's to try to make money by them.

Plays sold well, if published in the height of their popularity on the stage; otherwise they were less certain of a market in London, and had to be "vented by termers and country chapmen."⁴ The selling price was sixpence,⁵ the same as for a masque.⁶ The players, however, preferred not to spoil their own market by allowing

1. "Lanthorn and Candlelight." Dekker, "Works," ed. Grosart, vol. iii, p. 178; Nash, "Have with you. . . ." "Works," ed. Grosart, vol. iii, p. 206; "Counterbuff," vol. i, p. 85.

2. Greene's "Works," ed. Grosart, vol. xii, 7.

3. Christopher Barker's Report. Arber, "Transcript," vol. i, 144.

4. Middleton, "Family of Love," Pref. (pr. 1608).

5. Massinger, "The Bondman," (pr. 1624). Verses prefixed.

6. Lodge, "Illustrations of British History" (1838), iii, 227.

the text of plays to become common, and did their best to prevent their being printed during a popular "run."¹

The custom of reading in booksellers' shops must have interfered with the sale of books to some extent. We are told that "many peruse them ere they be sold."² But as many customers probably bought for country friends rather than for themselves, the practice of allowing them thus to sample the books had doubtless its advantages.

It was no easy matter, frequently, for the author to dispose of his manuscript. Dekker, at a time when he must have acquired a fair popularity, complains of the difficulty of suiting the stationers' taste. "Go to one, and offer a copy; if it be merry, the man likes no light stuff; if sad, it will not sell. Another meddles with nothing but what fits the time."³ The narrowness of the market for books is shown by the fact that the popularity of one or two trifling productions could effectually check all demand for any others. Nash suffered from this, but he consoled himself by scoring a jest against his foe, Gabriel Harvey. He can get no harvest, he says, by writing for the press, because "as for the printers, there is such gaping amongst them for the copy of my *L. of Essex Voyage*, and the ballet of threescore and foure knights," that for the most attractive wares they will not offer even "the contemptiblest somme that may be, . . . the price of all Harvey's works bound up together."⁴ Nor was this all the difficulty. The market was glutted by the practice, indulged in by many stationers, of saving the expense of payment for new work by "buttering o'er again, once in seven years," antiquated pamphlets, and issuing them as new.⁵ The needy writer was driven to

1. T. Heywood, "English Traveller," "To Reader" (pr. 1633).

2. N. Breton, "Works," vol. i, p. lxii.

3. Dekker, "Jests," ed. 1617, "To Reader."

4. Letter to Sir R. Cotton, believed by Collier and Grosart to be by Nash. See Nash, "Works," ed. Grosart, vol. i, p. lxiv.

5. Jonson, "Staple of News," i, sc. ii. Gifford's (ed. 1816), vol. v, p. 188.

all sorts of unworthy expedients in the endeavour to produce work attractive enough to compete with these cheap revivals.

Meanwhile, it should be noted that the writer's reward ended with the sale of his manuscript. This became the property of the buyer, whether he were a bookseller intending to publish, or a player's company buying for production on the stage, or a middleman speculating to sell again. It does not appear that the custom of giving "royalties" existed at all; nor does it appear that the author was ever regarded as entitled, in law or in equity, to share in any extraordinary profits.¹ On the other hand, of course, the publisher was responsible for all losses.

Strangely enough, authors never complain of the injustice of a system which compelled them to sell outright a manuscript which might afterwards prove of unexpected value.² Even Wither, in his diatribes against the iniquitous stationer who sucks the blood of the unfortunate writer, and steals the product of his studious labours, fails to point out the real root of the difficulty—in the selling custom. No doubt stationers would have resented bitterly any innovation calculated to reserve to the author a pecuniary interest in the manuscript after it had once left his possession. Their doctrine, upheld by legal opinion, was that only members of the Stationers' Company could lay claim to the benefit arising from the sale of books to readers.³ Thus they placed the claim of the stationer before that of the producers, writer and printer, regarding these latter as bound to produce for their benefit.⁴ Such a position seems in the present day

1. Henslowe once, in a fit of generosity, gave ten shillings to be divided amongst the authors of a successful play.

2. This is, of course, no unusual transaction in the case of unknown authors in the present day, who are usually glad enough to dispose of their earlier manuscripts for a definite sum down. But in Elizabethan days, it appears to have been the practice with all writers, known and unknown, unless the manuscript was stolen.

3. Wither, "Scholar's Purgatory," p. 31.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

quite untenable; but that it was seriously maintained is made clear by the history of Wither's famous quarrel with the Company. In order that he might benefit by the sale of his own work, he had asked for and obtained a privilege, giving him the sole right of publishing his "Hymns and Songs." There were, it is true, special circumstances about this privilege which were calculated to rouse opposition; but the ground on which it was contested was the principle stated above, viz., that Wither, not being a stationer, could derive no profit from the sale of books. Wither was, however, not the only instance of a "privileged" author; Samuel Daniel got a patent for his "History of England" in 1618; John Norden had a ten years' patent for his "Speculum Britanniae"; Arthur Golding got the sole right of publishing his own works;¹ and Alexander Nevill even obtained the prohibition of every translation of Livy but his own.² There does not, however, appear to be a single instance of the granting of a patent to authors except those of learned or religious works. The ordinary writer had no resource but to dispose straightway of his manuscript for the largest sum he could secure.

If, however, writers had had no subject for complaint but an inconveniently hard and fast system of selling, they would have called for no special sympathy. This was an incidental grievance, sure to be redressed sooner or later by the effects of competition in the publishing trade. They suffered a more definite injustice in the fact that the law regarded—or was popularly believed to regard—the mere possession of a manuscript, apart from any previous entry in the books of the Stationers'

1. See Lists of "Privileges." Arber, "Transcript," vol. i, 111-16; vol. v, lvii-lviii.

2. See Arber, "Transcript," ii, p. 312. (3 May, 1577.) Perhaps this was not so unusual as it might seem. At any rate it was in accord with Continental practice, which, according to Mr. G. H. Putnam, regarded the possessor of a "privilege" for a book in a particular subject as holding a monopoly *of the subject*. In the case of an edition of a classical author, the privilege was regarded as barring the production of any other edition.

Company, as implying ownership, and consequently the right to dispose of it. There was thus a regular trade carried on, to the injury of writers, in the illicit procuring and selling of manuscripts—a trade rendered more possible by the existing custom of preserving work for some time in manuscript and circulating it privately in copies made by the scribes. The following passage illustrates the facilities thus afforded for stealing from authors. In the dedication to "Terrors of the Night," Nash thus writes: "A long time since hath it been suppressed by mee: untill the urgent importunitie of a kind friend of mine (to whom I was sundry waies beholding) wrested a coppie from me. That coppie progressed from one scrivener's shop to another, and at length grew so common that it was readie to be hung out for one of their signes. . . . Whereuppon I thought it as good for mee to reape the fruite of my owne labours, as to let some unskilfull pen-man . . . startch his ruff and new spade his beard with the benefite he made of them." Nash was lucky in that no possessor of one of these numerous copies had yet carried it to the stationers for sale. Manuscripts far less commonly known had frequently that fate, to the permanent injury of the author's prospects of reward. No complaint is so often met with as that of the theft and illicit sale of manuscripts. Lodge protests against the wrong done to him by the piratical publication of certain of his poems, "owing to the base necessity of an extravagant melancholy mate."¹ Daniel grumbles at an instance of the "unmannerly presumption of an indiscreet printer," who had ventured to print a garbled text of a masque by him, acted by the Queen and her ladies,² and again rebukes "the indiscretion of a greedy printer" who had published some of his manuscript sonnets.³

Playwrights, more perhaps than other writers, suffered

1. "Glaucus and Scylla" (1589), Ded.

2. "Vision of Twelve Goddesses" (1604), Ep. Ded.

3. "Delia," Ded.

from the wrongful publication of their works; only in their case the loss was rather in reputation than in money. The financial loss fell upon the players who had bought the manuscript, which it was to their interest to keep from publication. Copies were procured by the agents of grasping publishers in various ways. Though Heywood protests vigorously that he at least is above the dishonest practice of selling his labours twice, "first to the stage and after to the Press,"¹ it is clear from the protest itself that some authors did make money by this means. Sometimes it was found possible to procure a full players' text and print from this; but an actor's copy gave usually only the single player's part, with cues; there would probably be only one or two complete manuscripts, and these no doubt jealously guarded. But a method of shorthand writing had already been invented, and this the publisher's agent found extremely useful in procuring the text of plays. An instance of this is afforded by the fortunes of the Play of Queen Elizabeth ("If you know not me, you know Nobody"). As the author tells us in the prologue to his own published edition :

It . . .

Did throng the seats, the boxes, and the stage,
So much, that some by stenography drew
The plot; put it in print (scarce one word true)
And in that lameness it hath limp't so long
The author now to vindicate that wrong
Hath took the pains upright upon its feet
To teach it walk; so please you sit, and see't.

The worst of it was that a book once printed and entered in the Stationers' Register became the property of him who entered it, and no other person could safely publish it, however necessary might be an amended edition. Wither states the case clearly. "The Stationers . . . by the laws and orders of their Corporation . . .

1. T. Heywood, "Rape of Lucrece" (ed. 1608). "To Reader."

can and do settle upon the particular members thereof a perpetual interest in such books as are registered by them at their Hall . . . and are secured in taking the full benefit of those books better than any author can by virtue of the King's grant, notwithstanding their first copies were purloined from the true owner, and imprinted without his leave.¹ It must have been indeed galling for the author whose work had been stolen and mangled, to have to make terms with the thief in order to secure the issue of a truer text!

We are undoubtedly indebted to this practice of surreptitious publication for many authorized and correct printed copies of works that would otherwise never have passed through the press. It seems to have become more and more customary for playwrights to see their works through the press. Thus Jonson carefully issued all his; Massinger and Middleton about half theirs. Repeatedly the author in his preface explains and excuses publication on the ground of its necessity, to forestall or supplant inferior pirated editions. Thus Chapman prints "All Fools":

Lest by others' stealth it be imprest
Without my passport, patched with others' wit.²

Sometimes, against his will, the author found himself forced to authorize a projected piracy in order to get the opportunity of insuring that it should at least be correct. In all probability, in such cases, he gained little besides the knowledge that he had protected his reputation; the manuscript was no longer his property.

The playwright suffered from piracy chiefly in reputation; the ordinary writer suffered both in reputation and

1. Wither, "Scholar's Purgatory," p. 29. They managed these things better in Italy. Ariosto held the copyright of his "Orlando Furioso": Tasso, Aretino, Gherardi, and others had the copyright of their own works. In 1544-5 a Venetian decree forbade anyone to print or sell a work without first producing written proof of having been authorised by the writer or his representatives. See G. H. Putnam, "Books and their Makers in the Middle Ages," ii, 363.

2. Chapman, "All Fools," Ded.

in purse. He was defrauded of the price of his manuscript, and it was mangled, pieced out by other work, and attributed to other men's labour; so that he found himself cheated of his due reward on all sides. Thus the printer Richard Joanes (*sic*) published a little book called "Breton's Bower of Delights," at which Nash unkindly sneered in his preface to "Astrophel and Stella." But out of all the poems in it Breton had actually written only three or four of the best, and he was justly irritated, both at the theft of these and at the injustice done to his poetic skill.¹ Again, to take another sphere of authorship, the learned Dr. Turner complains, in a dedication to no less a personage than Elizabeth herself, of the manner in which "a crafty, covetous, and Popish printer handled me of late, who, suppressing my name, and leaving out my Preface, set out a book (that I had set out . . .) with his preface, as though the book had been his own."² Shakspeare was saddled with the supposed authorship of two such inferior plays as "Sir John Oldcastle" and "The London Prodigal." The ingenious preface to "England's Helicon," by L. N., suggests that much pains would have been required, in many cases, to trace the authorship of some poems in this collection; it almost hints that L.N. would regard the task as a little superfluous.

In other ways still the unscrupulous publisher was capable of doing injury to an author. If Wither is to be believed—and though hot-tempered, he was an honest man—they would even go so far as to arouse suspicion of a book in the minds of the authorities, caring little for the good name and personal safety of the author, so their own interests were served thereby. Here is the passage referred to, from the "Scholar's Purgatory":

The Bad Stationer "will not stick to bely his author's intentions, or to publish secretly that there is somewhat

1. "Pilgrimage to Paradise" (1592). Pref. Ep. See "Works," ed. Grosart, vol. i.

2. Turner's "Herbal," 1568. Ded.

in his new imprinted books against the state, or some Honourable personages; that so, they being questioned, his ware may have the quicker sale. He makes no scruple to put out the right author's name, and insert another in the second edition of a book; and when the impression of some pamphlet lies upon his hands, to imprint new Titles for it (and so take men's moneys twice or thrice for the same matter under diverse names) is no injury in his opinion" (*sic*).¹

Mere carelessness caused a good deal of harm, cheating the public with imperfect copies, and thus hindering the sale. The unfortunate Drayton, who had had great difficulty in inducing stationers to accept the risk of publishing his "Polyolbion" at all, suffered from their carelessness even then. He complains that "some of the stationers that had the selling of the First Part of this poem, because it went not so fast away in the sale, as some of their beastly and abominable trash (a shame both to our language and nation), have either despitefully left out, or at least carelessly neglected the Epistles to the Readers, and so have cozened the buyers with imperfect books."² (It is not impossible that this was mere accident, due to distribution of the printing of the book among several master printers—a practice not infrequent when the number of presses allowed was strictly limited). Such dealing was not calculated to encourage the sale of the Second Part of the poem.

The author usually, when a manuscript had been openly agreed for, superintended its passage through the press. In fact, unless absent from London, or unless a personage of too great importance, he was expected to attend personally to supervise during the actual printing. Nash speaks of being "called away to correct the faults of the press" that escaped during his absence from the printing house.³ Barnaby Yong and Nicholas Breton

1. Wither, "Scholar's Purgatory" (c. 1624), p. 121.

2. Preface to "Polyolbion," Part II.

3. Lenten Stuff. "Works," ed. Grosart, vol. v, 198.

both crave the reader's indulgence towards printer's errors because they were prevented by more important affairs from "attendance at the press."¹

But the publisher would not scruple to ignore the author's natural desire to superintend, if he could thereby secure an earlier sale. Nash's "*Piers Penniless*" was "abroad a fortnight ere" he knew of it; offering itself "uncorrected and unfinished . . . to the open scorn of the world." The second impression was also well in hand before Nash was informed.² It certainly rested with the publisher to determine whether or not a work should be re-issued; if courteous, however, he would probably give the writer the chance of seeing it through the press.

It is not surprising, considering all the disabilities under which printers laboured, and the frequently surreptitious manner of production, that the standard of workmanship should have been very low. It is a fact that some of the (probably illicit) books of the period are in passages quite unintelligible, so that the marvel is how readers were obtained for them. Authors had good reason for complaint, as Heywood shows.

"The infinite faults escaped in my booke of Britaines Troy by the negligence of the printer, as the misquotations, mistaking of sillables, misplacing halfe lines, coining of strange and never heard of words, these being without number, when I would have taken a particular account of the errata, the printer answered mee, hee would not publish his owne disworkmanship, but rather let his owne fault lye upon the necke of the author."³

How lightly even a university printer estimated his responsibilities may be judged from the following jaunty preface by the Oxford printer, Joseph Barnes, prefixed

1. Yong; Preface to translation of Montemayor's "*Diana*"; Breton, "*Wit's Will*" (ed. 1599). "*Works*," Grosart, vol. ii, p. 63.

2. Epistle to Printer, "*Works*," ed. Grosart, vol. ii, 5-6. Or is this whole letter a publisher's trick, intended to excuse imperfections?

3. Heywood, "*Apology for Actors*." Shaks. Soc. (1841), p. 62.

to a pageant composed by John Lyly. "I gathered these copies in loose papers I know not how imperfect, therefore I must crave a double pardon; of him that penned them, and those that read them. The matter of small moment, and therefore the offence of no great danger."¹

In the published text of "The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth," verse is written as prose and prose as verse; passages are quite unintelligible. The 1598 edition of Greene's "James IV" contains a publisher's note stating that in the earlier edition the text had been so mangled that in some parts it was impossible to follow the thread of the discourse. Students of the quarto editions of "Hamlet" will remember the remarkable lapses from sense that here and there disfigure the First Quarto.

This is the First Quarto version of Hamlet's celebrated soliloquy on death:

To be, or not to be, I there's the point,
 To Die, to sleepe, is that all? I all:
 No, to sleepe, to dreame, I mary there it goes,
 For in that dreame of death, when wee awake,
 And borne before an euerlasting Judge,
 From whence no passenger euer return'd,
 The vndiscovered country, at whose sight
 The happy smile, and the accursed damn'd,
 But for this, the joyful hope of this,
 Whol'd beare the scornes and flattery of the world,
 Scorned by the right rich, the rich curssed of the poore?

The common practice of dictating to compositors was doubtless responsible for many errors. Thus "impotent and bed-rid," mis-heard, becomes "impudent and bedrid"; and "a spirite of hell" appears as "a spirite of health."²

On the other hand, low as was the general standard of the printing-press, instances can be met with, during

1. "Speeches . . . at the Progres . . . at Bissam," 1592.

2. "Facsimile of Hamlet," First Quarto, ed. W. Griggs, pp. 25, 6, 14.

this period, of excellent workmanship. Bacon's "Essays," issued in 1612 from the printing-press of James Beale, is a most excellent production. The type is clear, well-formed, and pleasant to the eye, the margins generous, the text inclosed within a plain framework or border. Another edition of the same year, printed for J. Jaggard, though less pretentious, is beautifully clear and accurate. Clearly it was not that skilled labour was lacking, but that the conditions of ordinary production fostered careless work—a carelessness, by the way, not infrequently shared in or condoned by authors.

Men of high social position, if they published, probably did so at their own charges; it was beneath them to derive profit from the sale of their writings. They only published—at any rate as acknowledged work—writings of dignity, such as Harington's translation of "Orlando Furioso"; or of utility, such as Bacon's "Essays" and "Advancement of Learning"; or religious works.

A less expensive method, adopted where found practicable, by more professional writers, was to bring out by subscription, thus substituting for private patronage and sale to the bookseller, a reliance upon what Leslie Stephen has called "collective patronage." John Foxe's "Tables of Grammar" (1552) were thus published, eight Lords of the Privy Council subscribing. A method somewhat analogous must have been pursued by Samuel Daniel, when he printed sumptuous editions of his works, and of his "History of England," to be privately presented to certain persons.¹ He must have had some guarantee beforehand that he would be recouped. A writer of a very different order of merit, John Taylor the Water Poet, made a practice of collecting subscriptions beforehand for nearly every pamphlet he published. For one little production, "The Pennyless Pilgrimage," he obtained 1,600 names. But apparently most of his patrons inconsiderately expected, and tried to exact, their

1. See his Note to Reader at close of Part I. of his "History of England."

full pennyworth. On one occasion, to his great indignation, half the "mongrel" subscribers refused to pay up.¹

It is not clear upon what terms Gabriel Harvey published his pamphlets against Nash. He undertook, certainly, to bear the expense of publication. On the other hand, Nash expressly states that the manuscript was the "copy" of the printer, to be disposed of at will.² Probably the arrangement was that, if the sale did not pay expenses, Harvey was to make good the deficit.

Under the conditions already described, it was inevitable that the bond of relation between author and publisher should be usually of the slightest. True, there are honourable exceptions. William Ponsonby published everything that is known of Spenser's, except his first work, the "Shepherd's Calendar." So also Simon Waterson published nearly all Daniel's writings, and was appointed executor at the poet's death. But most writers seem to have formed no lasting connection with any publisher; and so far is this the case that we even find instances of two parts of the same work being issued by different publishers. Thus Stubbes' "Anatomy of Abuses," Part I., was brought out in 1583 by R. Joanes; and Part II., in the same year, was published by W. Wright. Greene's "Mamiliæ" was licensed to T. Woodcock in 1581, and the Second Part to W. Ponsonby in 1583. Bacon employed several different publishers; Greene had dealings with seven or eight; Samuel Rowlands published with a great number.

But perhaps the most remarkable instance of the entire absence of any sentimental connection between the stationer and those for whom he published is seen in the relations of John Wolfe and Cuthbert Burby with Nash and Harvey. Every one knew that Nash and Harvey were at daggers drawn, and that Wolfe was the

1. See Taylor's preface to "A Kicksey-Winsey" (1619)). Mr. G. H. Putnam is of opinion that the practice of publishing by subscription originated in England. It began to obtain in Germany towards the close of the eighteenth century.

2. Nash, "Have with you. . . ." "Works," ed. Grosart, iii, 141-2, 39.

publisher of Harvey's attacks. Yet this very publisher is found (17th September, 1593) proposing to publish a book by Nash. There had probably been a quarrel with Harvey. Cuthbert Burby brought out Harvey's next diatribe against Nash; and he again followed it up within a few months by a pamphlet by Nash himself. Harvey was evidently unable to enlist a publisher in his interest.

This detachment of interest is the more remarkable in cases where the writer was definitely employed by the publisher. It seems to have been then customary, as it was much later, in the case of Oliver Goldsmith, for the stationer to lodge and board the writer while engaged upon the stipulated work. Nash lived for some considerable time in the house of the printer, John Danter, provided for by the good man's wife;¹ and, in the same way, John Wolfe provided board and lodging for Gabriel Harvey when busy writing in town.²

It is possible that some of the evidence here quoted must be taken with a little allowance. Both the complaints of authors and the statements of satirists are apt to be highly coloured. But then, as now, publishers had to live, and merely from the pages of the Stationers' Register it is easy to see that the publishers of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (with some honourable exceptions) cared chiefly for the making of such livelihood as they could. No doubt the struggle for existence among the unprivileged was very severe, and this led them to prefer the cheap and sensational to the more lastingly valuable among the productions of the age. Public taste was largely responsible; but the stationer cannot be entirely absolved from the charge

1. "Have with you. . . ." "Works," iii, 170.

2. Nash, "Have with you. . . ." Grosart, iii, 132. Respectable citizens, and booksellers in particular, frequently let lodgings both in England and on the Continent. Sidney and Languet lodged at the house of a publisher in Frankfort. Lyly represents Euphues and Philautus as lodging in a merchant's house and frequenting the court (see Arber's Reprint, p. 309). Fox-Bourne, "Life of Sidney," p. 61. See also Calendar MSS. Hatfield, *passim*.

brought against him by Wither, of refusing the work of the self-respecting artist and expert, in order to escape paying a fair reward, "seeing that he can hire for a matter of 40s. some needy Ignoramus to scribble upon the same subject, and by a large promising title make it as vendible for an impression or two as though it had the quintessence of all art."¹ It was not left for the nineteenth century to make the discovery that, for immediate reward, clever emptiness pays.

1. "Scholar's Purgatory," n.d., p. 130 (prob. c. 1624).

CHAPTER IV.

AUTHORS AND THE THEATRE.

"And must the basest trade yield us relief?"

—PARNASSUS PLAYS (1597-1601), ed. Macray, p. 3.

THERE was one form of literary work for the remuneration of which no dealings with the Stationer were necessary or usual. The theatre, with its great popularity as a form of entertainment, seemed to afford a chance of livelihood to any writer of genius. Accordingly, nearly all the men of real talent whose names have come down to us, tried their hand at dramatic writing. Some, like Nash, failed entirely; others, like Drayton, secured a fair amount of employment as theatrical hacks for a few years, then threw it up for more congenial work; others, like Marlowe, Greene, Shakspeare, Jonson, Middleton, and many more, found in drama a most congenial field for creation, and have left works by which they will live as great dramatists for all time.

Did the theatre reward them adequately? Did it even afford to them a comfortable livelihood? Many of them have been censured for leading lives unworthy of their great talents,—lives of low associations, squalor, coarseness, and violence. How far did their heroic and successful efforts to achieve great work serve to provide them with the means to live comfortable, self-respecting, decent lives?

Let us study the facts. For an accepted drama the usual rate of payment to the author was, if we are to judge from the payments made by Henslowe, £6, rising occasionally to £10. He paid Thomas Heywood, in two instalments, £6 for the play of "A Womon Kyllled With Kyndness."¹ But it is certain that he was a hard

1. Henslowe's Diary. Shakspeare Soc. (1845), p. 249, *et passim*. He paid £6 13s. 0d. for "a womones gowne of blacke velvett" to be worn by a performer in this same play. Six pounds was probably equivalent to £30 in modern coinage.

bargainer, taking advantage, on the one side, of the needy author, and on the other side, of the Company of players, who had in their turn to purchase the play from him as middleman. Letters written to him show that authors desirous of making good terms for themselves were in the habit of "playing off" the Company against him, alleging the high price the players were willing to pay for the manuscript in question. Daborne, a practised haggler, swears on one occasion, that he can get £25;¹ and if we are to believe him, the Company would often gladly pay £20. Even more effective is, perhaps, his threat of selling to the rival Company.² He does once, as a matter of fact, succeed in screwing Henslowe up to an offer of £20.³ It is for a play with a most attractive name, viz., "Matchavell (Macchiavelli) and the Devill." But by August of the same year this successful bargainer is down again to £12, with the addition of the "overplus of the second day"; and by December he is offering at the £10 rate. It looks as if the Company were unable, as customers, to compete permanently with Henslowe, and we may, from all the evidence, fairly argue that £10 was a good market price to pay for a play. Jonson seems, from his own statement, to have made an average of £12 or £14 a play.⁴ Henslowe must have had things all his own way when, in 1601, he was entreated, as a favour, to make up a sum already paid to £5, and to accept the "papers."⁵ For plays written in collaboration, the fee of £6 or so was divided amongst the collaborators.⁶

There can be little doubt that Henslowe's prices represent the lowest paid; they were the hard bargains of

1. Alleyn Papers, ed. J. P. Collier, Shakspeare Soc., 1843, p. 65.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 56, 57. (17th April, 1613.)

4. See p. 92.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

6. An unscrupulous playwright would occasionally make a little more by sharp practice. Greene is said to have sold "Orlando Furioso" twice over, to the Queen's Players, and to the Lord Admiral's Company. See "A Defence of Conny-catching," Greene's "Works," ed. Grosart, vol. xi, pp. 75-6.

a grasping middleman. He treated the Companies of players who rented his theatre as hardly as the playwrights. He lent them money on the security of their wearing apparel, on ruinous terms; he interfered with the hired players; he seems to have succeeded in ruining five companies in three years. Moreover, as they bitterly complain, "We have paid him for play-books £200 or thereabouts, and yet he denies to give us the copies of any one of them."¹

There is, as already shown, evidence that at times, in addition to the money fee paid down, authors received the "overplus" of a night's takings, the Company no doubt reserving a fixed sum for themselves.² This "benefit" day seems to have been usually the second or third day. Thus Dekker, in the prologue to "If this be not a Good Play, . . ." (1612), attacking authors for their greed, represents them as willing to write any "filth," so long as they get a "cram'd third day." Later, Jasper Mayne alludes to

One whose unbought muse did never fear
An empty second day, or a thin share.³

As we do not know how much of the takings was reserved by the Company it is difficult to estimate the probable value to the author of this benefit night; Daborne evidently expects it to produce (with the £12 fee) less than £20.

It has been assumed that Burbage's Company, which acted at The Globe, Blackfriars, being apparently on a somewhat superior footing,⁴ and producing, on the whole, a better class of drama, paid its authors more

1. Alleyn Papers, p. 80. Was Henslowe, one asks, responsible for the surreptitious issue of some of the printed play-texts, by the publication of which the players felt themselves defrauded?

2. Alleyn Papers, p. 66. See also passage just referred to on Daborne's bargainings (August, 1613), p. 90.

3. "A City Match" (1639). Prologue.

4. F. E. Schelling reckons, following Fleay's "Table of Court Performances," that Burbage's Company performed at Court during the period 1594 to 1603 just twice as many plays as its four competitors combined. See Schelling's "Elizabethan Drama" (1908), i, 318.

highly. This is possibly a justifiable conclusion; but sufficient evidence is not forthcoming for proof. For the best writers, the pay may have been slightly higher. Jonson, who wrote for some considerable time for this Company, told Drummond in 1618 or 1619 that he "never gained £200 for all the plays he had ever produced." As he had at this date written about twelve plays single-handed, and three or four probably in collaboration, it is clear that £12 or £14 was probably the average price he received. Jonson's was a great name in drama. He had been a dramatist, and a very successful one, for twenty-three years; he had earned on the average about £44 (in modern money) yearly. It is obvious that other sources of income, in his case chiefly patronage, were essential.

Calculating upon the same basis, Shakspeare could have supported himself in humble style (say at the rate of £200 yearly, in modern reckoning) for ten years, upon the proceeds of his dramatic writing. Chapman probably earned about £100, Massinger £220, Drayton £42.

The drama alone did not provide a livelihood,—though playwrights themselves may well have been an object of envy to such as had not the stage at command, "to furnish out Vices and Devils at their pleasure."

Times had changed for the successful dramatist when Dryden received as much as £100 for a single play.¹

In Jonson's case, and in that of a number of other writers, earnings from the theatre were supplemented by masque writing. The ordinary payment for a private unambitious masque was £5; Court masques would bring more.² How far masque-writing was regarded as a duty attached to the office of Poet Laureate is not clear; but it is practically certain that there was a substantial reward for every masque. Middleton, when

1. Beljame. "Le public et les hommes de lettres du dix-huitième siècle," p. 128.

2. "The Puritan." Anon., n.d. Act ii, Sc. iv.

City Chronologer, received for various literary services, chiefly as masque-writer, gifts from the City varying from £13 6s. 8d. to £20; the Court could not give less. We may, then, assume that Jonson probably received not more than £20 for each of his Court masques, which would bring him a total revenue of about £720.¹ From dramas and masques, then, allowing something for collaboration and for non-extant plays, he may have gained about £1,000 during an active career of about forty years; an average of £25 per annum.² The one fact that emerges clearly is the necessity for supplementing these earnings by some other means of support.

Very few Elizabethan authors produced so large a body of work as Ben Jonson; few were employed to anything like the same extent in the comparatively paying branch of Masque writing. If he, pensioned and with no extravagant vices to reproach himself with, fell into indigence in his later years, what must have been the inevitable lot of less favoured writers? If this is marked success, what must failure have been? We need no theories about vicious habits of self-indulgence to account for the incessant cry of poverty; we can, perhaps, explain some of the degradation by the debasing effects of sordid cares, and cringing for patronage.

Dramatic writers occasionally added to the profession of playwright that of actor; but it is probable that the number of dramatists who were also actors has been over-estimated. With our present knowledge it does not appear that there were more than nine,—including Field,

1. Jonson wrote 36 masques and "entertainments." Samuel Daniel and Henry Evans received together £20 for two interludes or plays given January 1st and 3rd, 1604-5. See P. Cunningham, "Accounts of Revels," p. 36. It is true that both Jonson and Inigo Jones each received for the Queen's Mask, at Christmas, 1610, the large sum of £40. But for a Mask at Court on New Year's Day, 1610-11, Inigo only received £16. See J. P. Collier, "Life of Inigo Jones" (Shaks. Soc., 1848), pp. 11, 13. Twenty pounds, for each of Jonson's masques, is therefore probably a very liberal computation.

2. In modern reckoning worth about £125. Jonson wrote altogether twenty-four plays, including two in collaboration, four not extant, and two unfinished. He may possibly have collaborated in one or two others.

Greene, Heywood, Jonson, Peele, Munday, William Rowley, Shakspeare, and Robert Wilson.¹ Speaking roughly, we may say that it seems to have become in time less usual to unite the two professions,—though Marlowe and Kyd, of the earlier writers, probably never acted. Either acting was too poorly paid, or too low in public esteem, or too crowded a profession to attract writers whom we know nevertheless to have been needy. It must be remembered that the companies were few and the stage small; there was not a career for a large number of actors.

As to salaries, innumerable references prove that actors, as a class, were regarded as poverty stricken. Gibes at their gorgeous raiment and empty pockets are common. A phrase in one of Gosson's pamphlets suggests that the ordinary pay of an hired actor was six shillings weekly,²—pay equal, probably, to that of an inferior clerk at the present day. Yet it was evidently looked upon as a resource,—the last and basest,—of the poor scholar. There is an excellent scene in "The Return from Parnassus," in which Burbage tests the acting powers of the poor University man by making him recite from the old play "Hieronymo" and from Shakspeare's "Richard III."³ The poverty stricken scholar shows his reluctance to enter upon this calling when he exclaims: "And must the basest trade yield us relief?" The regular actors above the rank of the "hired" men received fixed salaries. The amount given is not known; in 1635 it was as high as £180, but nearly all money incomes had risen considerably by that time.

Better prospects opened out to the man who could attain the position of "sharer" in a Company. The

1. J. Lyly trained actors,—a private troupe, but it is not clear that he acted himself.

2. "The very hirelings of some of our players, who stand at reversion of 6s. a week." "School of Abuse" (1579). N. Shaks. Soc., p. 29. A poor actor, about to go abroad, asked for bounty from Alleyn. In England, he urged, he hardly earned anything,—sometimes a shilling a day, sometimes nothing. See "Alleyn Papers," Shaks. Soc., 1843, p. 19.

3. "The Parnassus Plays," p. 16, ed. Macray.

"sharers" were, practically, the Company responsible for the management of the theatre, the production of plays, etc. They usually hired the theatre from the "householder" or "householders," who had half the "takings"; they paid the "hired players," bought properties, and met other expenses out of the half of the "takings" which fell to them, and divided any profit left.¹

It is extremely difficult to estimate the probable profits of a "sharer"; owing to the frequent interruptions due to closing theatres during plague, during the vacations, and for other causes. Taking, however, the highest estimate made, viz., Mr. Sidney Lee's reckoning, twenty-five pounds,² as the possible takings in one day at the Globe ("an exceptionally large and popular playhouse"), this gives say £12 10s. od. to the sharers. Expenses of "hirelings," properties, etc., might amount to, say, £2, leaving about £10 to be divided amongst a dozen or more "sharers." This was not a great fortune, but it was quite sufficient to make the "sharers" envied men,—"glorious vagabonds" they are called in "The Return from Parnassus." It was the great ambition of every player to rise to be a "sharer," by buying a share, or half-share. Nothing, perhaps, illustrates more clearly the general poverty, or the want of business ability of dramatic authors, than the fact that only three are known to have held shares in any Company, these being

1. Fleay, "Chronicle History of Stage," p. 327.

2. This is, I should think, a very high estimate. Henslowe, as one of two "householders," had presumably a quarter of the takings at his own theatre, and we find him receiving at Fryer Bacone, 19 Feb., 1591, 17s. 3d.; at hary VI., 7 Mar., 1591, £3; at hamlet, 9 June, 1594, 8s.; at the Jew of Malta, 14 Maye, 1596, £1 4s. "Henslowe's Diary," Shaks. Soc. (1845), pp. 20-68. Kiechel (writing in 1585) evidently considers £10 to £12 unusually high takings. See W. B. Rye, "England as Seen by Foreigners" (1865), p. 88. Certainly, private performances brought much less than £25. The regular fee for a performance at Court was from £6 12s. 4d. to £10. P. Cunningham, "Revels at Court," Shaks. Soc., 1853, pp. 27-45. In the earlier years of Elizabeth's reign, it was £6 13s. 4d., raised later by gratuities to £10. A play, "Histriomastix" (1610), represents players refusing to perform for less than £10, being "insolent with glib prosperity." fol. E.

Shakspeare, owner of four shares in Burbage's Company at the Globe Theatre, and two in the Blackfriars; Samuel Rowley, a sharer in Alleyn's Company; and William Rowley, sharer in the Lady Elizabeth's Company in 1612—25. It is possible, but not certain, that Thomas Heywood was a sharer. Three non-dramatic writers also fall into the category, viz., William Barksted, William Basse, and William Bird, and perhaps we may also include Armin as a writer.

Shakspeare's prosperity stands out remarkably. How had he been able, starting from poverty, to become the owner of no less than six theatrical shares?¹ Is it, perhaps, worthy of conjecture that the mysterious sum of £1,000, said to have been given by Southampton "to complete a purchase" was given him for this very object?

There was a still further stage in prosperity, viz., to become, not merely a sharer, but a "housekeeper," *i.e.*, owner, or part owner (as were Burbage, Alleyn, and Henslowe) of the theatre itself. Alleyn's generous foundation at Dulwich sufficiently proves his wealth; Henslowe grew rich, and Burbage is the contemporary type of prosperity. Hall is referring to Burbage when he exclaims:—

Who can despair that sees another thrive

When a craz'd scaffold, and a rotten stage
Was all rich Nennius his heritage?²

The actor's life was not enviable. It must have been very wearing, both physically and mentally,—made needlessly so by the conditions under which plays were acted, and the somewhat barbaric style of much of the acting.³ The frequent interruptions to which acting in

1. Mr. Fleay estimates that the six shares would have realised about £1,088.

2. "Virgidemiarum vi Libri." (1597–8), Book iv, Satire 2. Bishop Hall's Satires (1825), p. 55. Richard Burbage inherited the Blackfriars Theatre from his father in 1597.

3. See reference to "Tearing a passion to tatters," Hamlet, iii, 2.

London was subjected, often drove players to tour in the country; then their lot must have been more uncongenial than in town. They played in village halls, in barns, or in the houses of the country gentry,—when they appear to have made a green-room of the kitchen. During the tedious journeys from one small town to the other, along miry, rough, country tracks, it was by no means infrequent for the players,—in an age when every traveller rode on horseback,—to trudge on foot after the vehicle which carried their few properties. Dekker repeatedly taunts players with being compelled to “travel upon the hard hoofe from village to village for cheese and buttermilke,”¹ and “strowting up and down after the waggon.” He describes them driving “the poor country people . . . like flocks of geese to sit cackling in an old barn” while they played to them.² No doubt these gibes apply rather to the poor unlicensed troupes of players who are said to have strolled the country without passports. Certainly players in the country sometimes rode on horseback. Jonson’s enemies jeeringly describe him as ambling by a play waggon in the highway.³

As to the social position of the actor, whether playwright or not, it was of the lowest. We need not go so far as to hold that they were all regarded as outcasts and vagabonds, because classed by law with such; reasoning of this kind must consider all women of the present day as children, lunatics, or paupers, because classed with these by the franchise laws.⁴ But they were certainly regarded as of low social status; theirs is called “the basest trade,” and perhaps the consciousness of this,

1. Dekker, “Bel-man.” “Works,” ed. Grosart, iii, p. 81.

2. Dekker, “Jests.” “Works,” ii, p. 352-3.

3. “Satiromastix,” Sc. vii.

4. See, however, a marginal note—upon the trial of Sir John Yorke (*vide ante*, p. 45) for procuring the acting of a certain play—in the manuscripts of the Duke of Northumberland (1st July, 1614), “The greatest subject in England can have no common players, and to have them it is a riot. It is no trade, but they are Parliament rogues.” Hist. MSS. Comm. iii, App. pp. 62-3.

undermining their self-respect, tended to encourage some of them to give way to their coarser instincts. The subject will call for further treatment;¹ it cannot, however, be dismissed without reference to the stirring lines in which Shakspeare gave utterance to his weary loathing of a profession by which he felt himself, in that age, rendered vile.

Oh, for my sake do you with fortune chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds;
That did not better for my life provide,
Than public means, which public manners breeds.
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To that it works in, like the dyer's hand.

See further his unselfish wish to be forgotten by his friend,

Lest the wise world should look unto your moan,
And mock you with me after I am gone.

1. See chapter vii, pp. 157—61.

CHAPTER V.

AUTHORS AND SUPPLEMENTARY MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD.

Let Schollers bee as thriftie as they maye
They will be poore ere their last dying daye;
Learning and povertie will ever kisse.

—PARNASSUS PLAYS (1597—1601), ed. Macray, p. 3.

SUCH, then, were the economic conditions amidst which the Elizabethan professional writer embraced and pursued his career. The hope of patronage lured him on, and led him to accept for his work payment insufficient to keep body and soul together; patronage itself was fitful and scanty, and often entailed bitter and degrading experiences. The press, accepted by the writer largely as a stepping-stone to the desired haven of patronage, treated him accordingly. The average stationer drove hard bargains, preferred inferior work, snubbed and insulted the writer, and, when possible, stole his manuscript from him. Drama and the masque—the most paying forms of literary work—could not suffice to provide, even for the most popular writer, a “living wage.” Authority, as represented by Government and the Stationers’ Company, ignored any special claim on the part of the author to the produce of his own labours; indirectly encouraged theft from him; limited the number of copies produced for sale; kept up artificially the cost of publication, and, finally, harassed the writer by suspicious vigilance, and by accusations likely at least to spoil his market, and, at the worst, capable of costing him his life.

Neither by the bounty of patrons, nor by the proceeds of the sale of worthy literary productions, nor by both combined, could the average writer hope to live in any comfort. What other resources were open to him to eke out his scanty literary earnings?

Jonson was comparatively fortunate, though we know that he was miserably poor in later life. He had, besides the products of the sale of his manuscripts, some friendly patronage; he had the poet laureateship, worth about 100 marks (£66 12s. 4d.), though paid with little regularity; and he held for a short time the appointment of City Chronologer, worth about £10 yearly. Middleton also held this latter post for some years. But these appear to have been the only public appointments open to literary men, as such. The great majority of professional authors must have found themselves driven, either to accept positions to some extent incompatible with their chosen career, or to become, for a part of their time at least, mere hack writers, or worse, dulling the edge of their talents by slaving for the booksellers, or prostituting them by base pandering to low tastes.

To consider the possibilities open to the man of good education, unable to support himself entirely by artistic literary work. If possessed of sufficient learning and acuteness, he would probably find it most lucrative to turn his pen to controversial work, especially in theology. Officials and clerics were fully alive to the necessity of answering some of the many polemical treatises issued by Jesuit writers, from Louvain and elsewhere, and a fair remuneration seems to have awaited the man who could give adequate proof of his orthodox zeal, his learning, and controversial ability. Thomas Bell, a converted Jesuit, who wrote thirteen works against the Papists, and further made himself useful by assisting to discover disguised Jesuits, received a pension of £50 a year, no mean income in those days. Nor was it only the orthodox who were prepared to pay well for a learned and forcible exposition of their views. George Wither,

who had published a little sacred poetry, told his readers, "I have been offered a large yearly stipend, and more respective entertainments, to employ myself in setting forth heretical fancies, than I have yet probability to hope for by proposing the Truth."¹ Learned work of a scientific nature appears also to have been well rewarded by those interested.²

Translation, also, afforded employment to a number of professional writers, though for the most part it was probably mere hack work for the booksellers. John Wolfe alone must have provided a good deal of such employment, for he entered in the Stationers' Register no fewer than seventy-seven translations, from Latin, Italian, French, Dutch and Spanish. Information is wanting as to the payment received by the better class of translators. Philemon Holland had independent resources, and John Florio had many other ways of making an income, and probably relied little upon his translating work. The hack translator and compiler certainly fared badly. Richard Robinson, who produced many indifferent versions of dull Latin works for various publishers, appears to have received no money payment at all. The proceeds of a certain number of copies, to be disposed of by himself to friends and patrons—eked out, if luck willed, by a dedication fee—formed his only remuneration.³

Correcting for the press also provided some employment, especially for men sufficiently educated to read proofs in foreign and dead languages. John Foxe was a press corrector for some time while abroad, and possibly also acted in the same capacity for the printer John Day. It was reckoned among the serious expenses incurred by the printer, as compared with the mere publisher, that the former had his "learned correctors" to maintain constantly. They seem to have been engaged perman-

1. "Scholar's Purgatory" (c. 1624), p. 68.

2. See chapter i, p. 32, chapter iii, p. 72.

3. See article by R. B. McKerrow, on Richard Robinson's "Eupolemia," in "The Gentleman's Magazine," April, 1906.

ently, or at least for long periods. They were needed to correct reprints from classical and foreign languages, and such works as were not superintended in the customary manner by the authors themselves, if considered worth much correction.

The scholar in the "Return from Parnassus" probably represents aptly enough the contempt of the University-bred man for such technical routine occupation. "Whatever befalls thee," he cries, "keepe thee from the trade of the corrector of the presse. . . . Would it not grieve any good spiritt to sit a whole moneth nitting over a lousie beggarly pamphlet . . . ?"¹

Lower still, in the infernal circles in which literary sinners were condemned to toil and suffer, was the degrading employment of the news factor, the prophetic almanac writer, the ballad and jig writer, and the versifier who wrote lascivious lines to suit the taste of the vicious. To such work was the author of genuine talents occasionally forced, with greater or less reluctance, according to the standard which he had set up for himself. And he had here the mortification of finding himself elbowed by men of different calibre—mere uneducated scribblers. The perpetual gibes of men like Nash, Dekker, Hall, Hake, even of Jonson and Drayton, show that they felt keenly the competition caused by these scribblers, and felt, too, that by the public the more worthy writer was by no means always clearly distinguished from the base.

No doubt the appearance of this lowest class of writer was the direct result of the spread of elementary education and the introduction of printing. Only the very lowest, crudest forms of so-called literature could be at this time appreciated by a great part of the reading public; but for those there was a large ready sale. This is proved by the very large numbers of "ballets" and broadsides registered by the Stationers' Company.

1. "The Parnassus Plays," ed. Macray, Part ii, p. 82.

Certain writers, such as William Elderton, Thomas Deloney, Robert Armin, etc., "the riffe-raffe of the scribbling rascality," acquired a widespread popularity by their ephemeral productions; and other writers of greater capabilities, such as Breton, Dekker, Greene, Middleton, Rowlands, published some work which can only be distinguished from that of their inferiors by greater vigour of treatment. Very few, even of the best, could boast that they had never been induced by need to cater for unworthy tastes. Lodge could not, for in his "Glaucus and Scylla" he registered a vow:

To write no more of that whence shame doth grow,
Or tie my pen to pennies-knaves' delight,
But live with fame, and so for fame to wright.

Nash confessed with his usual frankness, "Twice or thrice in a month, when *res est angusta domi* . . . I am faine to let my plow stand still in the midst of a furrow, and follow some of those new-fangled Galiardos and Signor Fantasticos, to whose amorous Villannellas and Quipasses I prostitute my pen in hope of gain. . . ." ¹

But suppose a writer unwilling to sink to the level of the "scribbling rascality," what other resources were open to him, with which to eke out scanty earnings and fitful bounty?

A young University man of talent, in need of a settled income, might perhaps naturally hope for preferment to a Fellowship. But to qualify for a Fellowship was expensive, and many promising young men found it impossible to reside for a sufficient length of time.

University education was becoming, in Elizabethan days, a costly matter. It had undoubtedly become more expensive since it had grown to be a custom for the sons of rich men to spend some time at the University, as

1. "Have with you to Saffron Walden." "Works," iii, 44. G. Harvey, with how much truth one cannot say, accused Nash of having written "filthy rimes, in the nastiest kind." "Pier's Supererogation." "Works," ed. Grosart, Vol. ii, p. 91.

part of the training for a secular career.¹ As to the actual cost, Gabriel Harvey boasted that his father had spent £1,000 on the education of four sons²—a very large sum then for the moderately wealthy, impossible to a poor man. An allowance of £50 to £60 (equal to £250 and £300 in present money) seems to have been customary for young men of good family. But there was one advantage in the presence at the University of these undergraduates in easy circumstances. They provided paid employment for poorer fellow-students as personal attendants.³ Sometimes university students eked out their scanty means, as many of their predecessors had done, by begging. In January, 1580, a "scoller of Oxforde" was accused of wandering through the country with a fellow-student, with a forged licence to beg, in order "to get moneye . . . for their better exhibition."⁴ There were, of course, many scholarships to the University from grammar schools, and sizarships for poor undergraduates. Marlowe and Spenser were in all probability indebted to such provision. The records of Beverley Corporation mention a number of exhibitions granted to grammar-school boys on their admission to the University, the sums granted varying from thirty shillings to two pounds yearly.⁵ But, in any case, frequent references go to prove that the lot of the University scholar was hardly enviable. "Scholars," says Breton, are "hardly brought up, therefore they should away with hardness the better; their allowance in colledges is but small, therefore little meate should content them."⁶ Moreover, as we shall see later on,

1. See Bass Mullinger. "The University of Cambridge, from 1535 to the accession of Charles I." (1884), p. 274.

2. Harvey. "Green's Memorial," Sonnet XX. "Works," ed. Grosart, i, 250-1. It is possible that Harvey is reckoning the total cost of school and University education. The sum is equal to £5,000 or £6,000 of our money.

3. Bass Mullinger. *Ibid.*, pp. 397-400.

4. "Hist. MSS. Comm. V." App. Part i, 579.

5. A. F. Leach. "Yorkshire Schools," I., liii.

6. "Will of Wit." "Discourse of Scholar and Soldier." "Works," ed. Grosart, Vol. i.

scholarships and sizarships, like most other advantages, could with difficulty be obtained without influence.

Private benefactors, again, would not infrequently support promising youths at the University, as Lady Burleigh supported Speght, and as Alex. Nowell supported others. But the course was long—seven years before proceeding to the M.A. degree, and it sometimes happened that length of time, and accident, brought to an end the benefactor's generosity. No University preferment could, naturally, be looked for by one whose career had stopped short of the degree, unless indeed, once more, by the way of "influence."

It would be noted, further, that the holding of a Fellowship, or even mere residence after taking the M.A. degree, entailed certain obligations not very congenial to the candidate for fame and money in the field of *belles-lettres*. Every resident M.A. was required to give lectures, which practically meant, to interpret and comment upon the somewhat arid "texts" which formed the staple of University study in Dialectic, Law, and Theology. His remuneration for this work was confined to the fees paid by undergraduates.

There were, further, practical reasons which made residence in Oxford or Cambridge inconvenient for the man who wished to become a professional writer. The distance of both Universities from London, the only centre of the publishing trade, was a serious bar.¹ Nor could he hope to get work published by the University printing presses. From 1522—84 there was no printing at Cambridge, and when in 1584 a press was started under the auspices of the University, it met with most determined opposition from the Stationers' Company, as a supposed infringement of their rights. Thanks to

1. It was otherwise with the University of Paris. Situated in the heart of a great city, the University could and did exercise controlling powers over all publications.

Burghley, the University triumphed; but no great benefit resulted to the professional litterateur.¹

John Lyly, in 1574, applied to Burleigh to use his influence to obtain for him a Fellowship;² but this was before the days of his authorship, which was perhaps indirectly brought about by his failure to obtain the desired preferment. Nash, on the other hand, declares that he "might have been Fellow," if he had chosen. No doubt we are to infer that he scorned it.³ It is doubtful whether his boast was justified; he left the University before the end of his seventh year of residence,⁴ and, what is more, he does not appear to have been able to reckon upon the necessary influence. "It is in my time an hard matter," says Harrison, "for a poore man's child to come by a Felowship. . . . Not he which best deserveth, but he that hath most friends . . . is alwaies surest to speed" (1577).⁵ Gross corruption and interference from highly placed personages for the most part decided the choice of Fellows. "Learning nowadays gets nothing if it come empty-handed; promotion . . . is becoming a purchase."

There was another determining factor in this question of residence at a University—one, if possible, still less favourable to the profession of literature as an art. During the greater part of the reigns of Elizabeth and James I, the policy of the Universities was governed by considerations theological rather than educational or scholarly.

1. The Oxford University Press published about one hundred and sixty works during the years 1585-1603, all but eight of these being in Latin or Greek, or theological works. The eight exceptions are nearly all occasional verses on recent public events. Three only attain to any literary rank, viz., Breton's "Pilgrimage to Paradise" (1592), Davies' "Microcosmos" (1603), and an anonymous translation of Six Idyls from Theocritus. (See F. Madan, "The Early Oxford Press," 1895, pp. 14-57.) Later on, Cambridge published Giles Fletcher's "Christ's Victory and Triumph" (1610) and Phineas Fletcher's "Purple Island" (1633); but the writers' father had held an important position in the University.

2. "Euphues," ed. Arber, 1895, p. 3.

3. "Have with you." "Works," ed. Grosart, v, p. 189.

4. Nash. "Lenten Stuff." "Works," v, p. 241.

5. "Description of England." New Shaks. Soc., Part i, p. 77.

There was, during the greater part of Elizabeth's reign, great dearth of men fit for the ministry, and in consequence, the authorities imposed upon the Universities as their primary duty the training of men to enter holy orders. Of course, the Universities had always been the homes of theological study, and the training ground of priests; but this was now made almost their exclusive concern. The other mediæval University studies, civil and canon law, medicine, and the liberal arts, were dying out at the Universities, falling into disuse, or becoming attracted to London. Every effort was made to encourage the study of divinity, and turn the Universities into mere feeding supplies for the Church. Pains were taken to secure that the profession "of the study of divinity" required from many Fellows, should not be nominal.¹ The five years' liberal education which formerly preceded the study of divinity was curtailed, and sometimes even dispensed with, to the disgust of the broader-minded.² No doubt the average Englishman thoroughly approved of this view of the functions of the University.³ It was practical; and, moreover, theology was at that time a subject of great interest to most men. The policy had, however, an unfortunate effect. It fostered hypocrisy, and it lowered the educational standard, causing candidates for preferment to be selected on theological grounds rather than for their intellectual qualifications.⁴ A show of religious zeal not only added to the chances of an aspirant for honours, it even assisted him materially by accelerating

1. Bass Mullinger. "Cambridge from 1535 to the Accession of Charles I.," pp. 307-9.

2. W. S(tafford). "A Brief Concept . . . 1581." New Shaks. Soc., p. 25.

3. Breton, in "Wit's Trenchmour," 1597, represents a rustic father complaining of the neglect of his son's education in Divinity; "New Schoolmen have a new fashion in their teaching," he grumbles. ["Works," ed. Grosart, i, p. 17.]

4. In 1580 Greek was almost extinct in St. John's College, Cambridge, formerly the home of Ascham. (See Bass Mullinger, "Cambridge from 1535 to the Accession of Charles I.," Vol. i, p. 416.)

his attainment of degrees. And on the other hand, Nash grumbles: "If at the first peeping out of the shell a young student sets not a grave face on it, and seems not mortifiedly religious (have he never so good a witte, be hee never so fine a scholler), he is cast off and discouraged. . . . Your preferment . . . occasioneth a number of young hypocrites."¹

Nash's view is probably biassed; but he represents the natural resentment felt by the unclerical writer towards an evil which really existed. It is difficult, under the circumstances, to believe that he himself was ever "religious" enough to have stood any chance of a Fellowship!²

If this theological atmosphere did not deter a man from University residence, then a further discouragement would probably confront him. Both Oxford and Cambridge seem, during the latter part of the sixteenth century, to have been hotbeds of contentiousness. Their quarrels were notorious. The State Papers are full of records of appeals to the Crown, now from one side, now from the other, in bitter college feuds. Theological bias was one great cause, the tyranny of heads of colleges was another, and frequently the two combined. Certain changes made in internal administration had given greatly increased powers to the heads of colleges, who seem frequently to have been at open war with their respective bodies of Fellows. Thus in 1565 the head of Caius College is said to have expelled twenty Fellows, and to have punished some even with beating and the stocks!³ In 1576 the visitor of New College, Oxford, found the college distracted by such grievous factions that four ringleaders had to be ejected and others

1. "Christ's Tears" (1594), "Works," ed. Grosart, Vol. iv, p. 185.

2. Of the hundred and sixty publications of the Oxford University Press between 1585 and 1603, no less than eighty-one are sermons or theological treatises.

3. Bass Mullinger. "Cambridge from 1535 to the Accession of Charles I.," Vol. i, p. 201.

chastised.¹ The Fellows of Magdalene, Cambridge, petitioned the Chancellor against their President on the ground that he had "rooted out" a Welsh lecturer simply for his nationality, and that he pastured his cows in the college grounds, as if they were his private property.² Yet again, we learn that the warden of Merton College, Oxford, has, after a severe tussle, got the better of his Fellows, fined and punished them, and expelled one, who is said to have died "of grief or curst heart" within five days!³

As to the general standard of learning and industry, it is a most significant fact that the College Libraries seem to have been regarded very much as suitable for places of detention! In 1611, John Baber, a Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, being found guilty of misdemeanour and ill example, was ordered as a penalty "to studie in the Library every day in the week," from 8 to 9 a.m. and from 1 to 2 p.m. for a month! In 1624 we find a similar use of the Library recorded.⁴

Such surroundings were not likely to prove congenial to men seeking leisure and peace for the work of artistic creation. The inevitable effect was to drive from the University all men of dignity, worth, and genius. John Foxe had to resign his Fellowship at Magdalen, Oxford, on account of his objection to the theological requirements exacted. Lyly, we have seen, failed to get the Fellowship he asked for; hardly a single writer of any repute kept up his connection with either University.⁵

From the practical point of view, moreover, a Fellowship was probably hardly worth the sacrifice of leisure, peace, and principle involved. Although the Universities seem, under Elizabeth, to have steadily increased in

1. Hist. MSS. Comm., Call. MSS. Hatfield, ii, p. 137.

2. Bass Mullinger. *Ibid.*, Vol. i, p. 287 n.

3. J. Chamberlain's "Letters" (8th Nov., 1598). "Camden Soc., Old Series, 1861, Vol. lxxix.

4. Hist. MSS. Comm., II. App., p. 132. MSS. Linc. Coll.

5. An exception is Thomas Heywood, who is stated to have been a Fellow of Peterhouse.

prosperity, if not in scholarship and dignity, the value of preferments was very small, amounting to the very barest living. Fellowships at King's College, Cambridge, were worth a little more than £5 13s. 4d. yearly; at St. John's most of the Fellows received £3 5s. 4d.; at Peterhouse 2s. a week. To quote from Mr. Bass Mullinger's interesting account: "Generally speaking, the Fellow of a college who received 1s. 6d. a week for what we should now term his "board," thought himself well off."¹ If Nash is to be believed, Gabriel Harvey, a Fellow of Pembroke, was unable to pay his own commons, and had to be helped by the charity of the rest of the Fellows.² J. Lyly was in debt at one time for his *battel*, 23s. 10d.³

The heads of colleges were little better off. When, in 1561, John Pilkington announced to the Vice-Chancellor his resignation of the mastership of St. John's College, Cambridge, he stated that its yearly value was only £12.⁴ In 1591 the Master of the same college, a man esteemed for his classical training, was so poor that the Dean of St. Paul's had taken charge of one of his sons, by way of charity to him.⁵ There is some justification for Nash's assertion that half-educated University men "betake themselves to some trade of husbandry, for any maintenance they get in the way of alms at the University."⁶ Even these poor endowments were threatened by the rapacity of courtiers.⁷

The general poverty of members of the University is strikingly illustrated by a chance remark uttered by a boasting snob in the "Returne from Parnassus": "I cannot come to my inn in Oxforde without a dozen

1. Bass Mullinger, *ut supra* (1576), p. 379.

2. "Have with you . . ." Nash, "Works," Vol. iii, 130-31.

3. "Euphues," ed Arber, p. 7.

4. Bass Mullinger, *ut supra*, p. 185 n.

5. "Camden Soc.," Letters of Eminent Literary Men, 1843, p. 87. Letter of 29th April, 1591, from Alexander Nowell to Burleigh.

6. "Anatomie of Absurditie." "Works," ed. Grosart, i, 54-55.

7. *Ibid.*, i, 52-53.

congratulatory orations, made by *Genus* and *Species* and his ragged companions. I reward the poor *ergos* most bountifullie, and send them away.”¹

Private tutorships, it is true, provided one source of emolument for senior members of the University. But, on account of the youthful age at which undergraduates came up, these involved duties very much more exacting than those of the tutor of the present day; more arduous than those of the present master in a public school. They amounted to a fulfilment of the functions of teacher, matron, and guardian. The tutor superintended the expenses of the undergraduate, bought necessary apparel and bed-linen for him, bought his books (and sometimes was left to pay the bill!), taught him privately, and superintended his religious and moral welfare.² The tutor of the Earl of Essex writes regarding the young earl's extreme necessity of apparel: “he will, if not soon supplied, be not only threadbare but ragged.”³ As late as 1646 we find a father requiring his son's tutor to see that he has employment on Sundays and fast-days, and to take care that he reads the Scriptures morning and evening. He usually had to share his room with his pupil.⁴ One of the characters in the “Returne from Parnassus” recalls the time when he was in Cambridge, and lay “in a trundle bed” under his tutor.⁵ For all this wearisome attendance upon the youthful undergraduate, during an academic year

1. “Parnassus Plays,” Part i (c. 1600), ed. Macray, p. 85.

2. Bass Mullinger. “Cambridge Characteristics in the Seventeenth Century,” p. 489. If the tutor had a wife she superintended the health of the youthful undergraduate. (Thus Mrs. Wilkinson provided an eye-lotion for her husband's pupil, Ned Harley.) Wise mothers sometimes propitiated the powers by sending presents to the tutor's wife. See “Letters of Brilliana Harley” (1638-9), Camden Soc., 1854.

3. Cooper. “Annals” (ed. 1843), p. 353. See a similar appeal for money and clothing for his pupil by the tutor of James Oxenden (c. 1630) quoted by Mr. Plomer in “The Library,” Vol. vi (new series), p. 33.

4. Bass Mullinger, *ut supra*, p. 49.

5. “Parnassus Plays” (1597-1601), ed. Macray, p. 110.

arranged to give little more than six weeks' vacation, the remuneration was one pound per quarter.¹

Clearly, no one who aspired to a career in literature could afford to take upon himself duties so exacting for a reward so inadequate. John Florio, it is true, was at one time a tutor in Oxford; but he seems to have renounced the position for the more promising occupation of private teacher of languages, with a good connection, in London. The income gained from this seems to have sufficed for him, and in the intervals of teaching he was able to write.

Thus, with preferments given almost entirely through "influence," or according to theological acquirements or pretensions; limited to those in Holy Orders, or proceeding to take them; and, finally, far from sufficient to maintain the holder in bare necessities; with obligations to lecture and conduct University exercises in subjects particularly unlikely to be congenial to a mind of literary and artistic bent; the only other means of subsistence—acting as tutor—being an engrossing duty which would leave no time or energies for creative work; it is not surprising that the University should have proved the very last home for a would-be writer.

As to the openings offered by the lower teaching profession, not much can be said here. The subject of school education in the later sixteenth century is beset with many difficulties and problems as yet unsolved. It

1. John Coke's father paid for his tuition during Michaelmas quarter, 1626, only ten shillings; but he seems usually to have paid one pound (Hist. MSS. Comm. XII., App. i, pp. 191, 284; Cowper MSS.). Henry Brougham's tuition at Queen's College, Oxford, thirty years later, was still one pound per quarter. A suit of clothes cost £9 10s. 5d. (Hist. MSS. Comm. XII., App. vii, p. 23; Le Fleming MSS.). But a great lord paid more. For the young Earl of Rutland, in 1588, twenty pounds was paid for tuition, it is not clear whether a quarterly or yearly sum (Hist. MSS. Comm. XII., App. iv, Vol. i, p. 248; Rutland MSS.). By 1684 tutors' fees seem to have risen greatly. The MSS. of the Rev. W. Pyne record a payment in that year of £22 0s. 4d. for tuition, it is not clear whether for a half-year or a year (Hist. MSS. Comm. IX., Part ii, App., p. 495).

is proposed here simply to offer a few scattered remarks upon the economic position of the teacher.¹

There is reason to believe that teaching at the great grammar schools connected with the "collegiate churches" of Eton, Westminster, or Winchester was sufficiently lucrative.² They were large schools, richly endowed, and frequented by the sons of the wealthy aristocracy. Camden's prosperous career seems to point to this conclusion, though it should be remembered that he held also the office of Clarenceux King-of-Arms.

But it is certain that the ordinary stipend of the master of a grammar school afforded but a very scanty provision for his needs, especially if he were married. Salaries ranged from about £5 or £6 to £20, with, occasionally, a much smaller allowance for an usher to teach the "petties," *i.e.*, boys of seven to ten years of age.³ They had formerly been of greater value, but the ill-judged measures taken under the Chantries Act in the reign of Edward VI, had, by substituting a fixed payment for endowments derived from property, greatly impoverished schools throughout the country. So serious was the depreciation that, under Elizabeth, it was found necessary in some districts to combine the funds of no less than five schools, in order to secure enough to pay a schoolmaster. Five Yorkshire grammar schools could, in 1583, raise only £25. 7s. 2d. between them for the support of the master and other expenses.

It was not that there was lack of good schools, or schools which had done good work—even the pessimist Philip Stubbes admitted that there were "excellent good

1. For much of the information upon this topic I am indebted to F. Leach, "English Schools before the Reformation," and "Yorkshire Schools."

2. Colet had offered to the High-master of his new school, St. Paul's, the magnificent stipend of £35, proof, says Seebohm, that he meant to secure the services of more than a mere common grammarian. Seebohm, "Oxford Reformers," p. 219.

3. Mr. John Trap, Schoolmaster of the Free School at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1629, received a salary of five pounds, in addition, probably, to house and garden. See J. O. Halliwell, "Stratford Records," p. 98.

schoolles, both in cities, townes and countries'¹—but they were seriously crippled in their resources, and afforded little inducement to men of learning and genius. This was fully recognized by authorities whose duty it was, in the various districts, to care for education. In an appeal (1548) to the protector Somerset against the proposed sale of the endowment of Sedbergh Grammar School, the town authorities plead for more generous treatment of schoolmasters: "*Quinetiam doctus nullus provinciam hanc surbibit si quando vacuus fuerit locus, ubi ad tantas angustias stipendium adigitur, parum nimium parum sunt decem pondo ad doctum quemvis alendum hoc sibi soli satis non est, uxori et familiae multo minus erit. Quis ullius spei aut eruditionis juvenis academiam deseret locum amaenitatis plenissimum . . . et cum non minore fortassis stipendio ex collegio, ut ad populum rudem, regionem vastam, horridam gentem, omnis elegantioris culturae expertem, ad immensos labores et non ferendos abeat, praesertim cum tam vile praemium laborum ferat (sic).*"² It should be noted that nearly all the grammar schools were free,³ the master being paid a fixed salary, derived from landed property. It is true that there is evidence of extra payments given for extra tuition, or by way of free presents; but there is not sufficient to warrant a belief that this was a frequent custom.⁴

1. "Anatomy of Abuses," New Shaks. Soc. (1877-82), Vol. ii, 19.

2. Leach. "Yorkshire Schools," Vol. ii, p. 253-3. They say no learned man will come to the place, if vacant, for, besides other hardships, the salary [£10] is "much too small to maintain a learned man, to say nothing of wife and family." "What young man of hope or learning," they ask, "will leave the University, a place full of delight . . . and possibly affording him no smaller income, in order to come to a rude people, a desolate region, a barbarous folk, devoid of all refined culture, to unlimited and intolerable toil, and that, too, when he is to reap so wretched a reward?"

3. Mr. Leach has shown that the term "Free School" bears the obvious meaning, *i.e.*, "a school giving gratuitous education." See "English Schools at the Reformation," pp. 110-13.

4. At an earlier period, and the custom may have continued, the schoolmaster expected frequent invitations to dine or sup with the parents of scholars. The early manuals of Latin contain ready-made forms of invitation from the boy to his master, and no doubt the teacher saw to it that the boy used them. [A. W. P.]

We know that the grammar school master, Christopher Ocland, was constantly in financial distress, and we know the stipend upon which he had to depend. When the school of St. Olave's Southwark, was founded¹ or remodelled on an improved footing, in 1571, Ocland was engaged as head master, with the former head, if willing, as his assistant. Ocland's salary was fixed at 20 marks yearly (£13. 6s. 8d.), for which he was to teach the "grammarians," and help the usher with the "petytes." He was, apparently, to be allowed also to receive six or eight boarders to eke out his income "for that twenty marks was not sufficient lyving."² He found it quite impossible to live upon these meagre resources, and was constantly petitioning great officials for some substantial patronage. In 1580 he gave up teaching, and tried to gain a living by writing, with little success. In 1590 we find him living at Greenwich, because his debts make it impossible for him to be in London; he is teaching again, but his labours "will not fynde" him "mete and drynck." He petitions Burleigh in most abject terms: "Helpe my very goode Lorde, my singular good Lorde, helpe I praie and most humbly desyre your honor for God's sake, your most poor and unfortunate Christopher."³ Still later, we find it proposed to relieve the poverty of his widow, by giving her the next vacant post as "coal-treasurer at the waterside."⁴

Teachers in the elementary schools, and those with private schools of their own, fared even worse. The ordinary rate of payment was from twopence to sixpence a week for each child, in the private school; in the public school, probably, a fixed salary. That the pay was low, however, is only too clear. Stubbes states that in the

1. There was evidently a school of some sort existing before, since there was a schoolmaster, with some claim to a continuance of employment.

2. "Camden Soc.," Letters of Eminent Literary Men (1843), pp. 65-6.

3. "Camden Soc.," *ut supra*, pp. 73-74.

4. "Acts of the Privy Council (ed. J. R. Dasent) (7th June, 1593), Vol. xxiv, pp. 297-8.

"inferior schools, . . . such small pittance is allowed the schoolmasters, as they can . . . hardly maintaine themselves . . . they teach and take paines for little or nothing."¹ Gibes at "hungry scholars" who spend their time teaching children their horn-books, or drudging over "pueriles confabulationes" with "a companie of seven-year old apes,"² are frequently met with. "As lousy as a schoolmaster"³ was a comparison that could apparently be used without inappropriateness.

The labours of the schoolmaster were by no means light. Then, as now, they were too exacting to allow time for much other work. The ordinary grammar school hours averaged from seven to eight hours a day; and, if we may judge from the account given by a seventeenth century schoolmaster of Rotherham the curriculum was sufficiently varied. The "petties" learnt accidence, syntax, and easy Latin translation; the boys in the higher forms studied Terence, Ovid, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Seneca, Juvenal, Persius, Isocrates, Hesiod, Homer, and sometimes even Hebrew. They wrote themes and Latin verses, and they held disputations. The task of superintending such a mass of work, even with the assistance of an usher and a few of the older boys, can have left very little leisure or energy for writing poetry or emulating the productivity of Nash the pamphleteer.

Other duties less congenial than that of reading classic authors fell to the lot of the schoolmaster. Even the "collegiate" schoolmasters were required to attend to details which must have been very irksome, and they were at times treated with scant courtesy, as the following letter will show. It is from the irate parent of a boy whose epistolary skill appears to be defective:

"Roger Coppey to J. Harman at Winchester, 1593, Dec. 18.—Look to Anthony Coppey, your scholar, and

1. "Anatomy of Abuses," ii, 20–21.

2. "Parnassus Plays" (1597), ed. Macray, p. 21.

3. "The Puritan," (Anon. dating early in 17th century), i, sc. 2.

command him not to write unto 'my' but to make you privy to it, for his hand is very bad, and the manner of writing worse, as you see by this letter that he send unto 'my,' and from henceforward let him not write but in Latin when he can do it of himself, and not else; and, I pray, good Mr. Harman, speak to one that may teach him to write very fear (*sic*). The bearer hereof is my brother, and he shall tell you my mind at large."¹

The lot of tutors in private families must have varied considerably. Samuel Daniel was treated as an honoured friend; so also was William Browne.² In the ordinary middle-class family, especially if of the class of *nouveau-riches*, his position was certainly far from pleasant. The satiric picture of the tutor drawn in the "Returne from Parnassus," is doubtless highly coloured; but it must have borne some relation to fact. He is to be content to fare like the servants, living on bread and beer and bacon: he is to wait at meals; to work all harvest time; and never to begin his teaching without an obeisance to his pupil. For all this he is to receive five marks a year, and a gift from his master's cast-off wardrobe.³ The employer was held responsible for the orthodoxy of the private teacher, a penalty of £10 being imposed in 1580 upon all who had in their houses schoolmasters who did not attend church.⁴

Besides Daniel and William Browne, three other writers held the position of family tutor.⁵ Only three, Camden, Ocland, and Shirley, are known to have been school teachers, and the two latter gave up the profession

1. Hist. MSS. Comm. Cal. MSS. Hatfield IV., 438.

2. On the other hand, Sir Daniel le Fleming gave to William Baxter, as tutor or schoolmaster, forty shillings a year "and his diet," with permission to take other pupils. The wages he gave a maid-servant were three pounds a year. But this was in 1656-63. Le Fleming MSS., Hist. MSS. Comm. XII., App. vii, pp. 365, 373.

3. "Parnassus Plays," Part i, pp. 45-46 (ed. Macray).

4. J. S. Burn. "The Court of High Commission," p. 9 n.

5. They were John Foxe, Stephen Gosson and William Webbe.

when they turned to writing.¹ There is a legend that Shakspeare, before he went to London, spent a little time teaching in the country. John Davies was a "writing-master," and John Florio a "master of languages"; but their position, with a private aristocratic *clientèle*, differed greatly from that of the ordinary schoolmaster. Two other occasional writers who were also schoolmasters, are Richard Knolles, and Francis Meres.

Nor could the church offer a very enviable refuge to the needy literary man, except in the higher ranks. Throughout the great part of this period, in spite of strenuous efforts at improvement the financial position, social status, and intellectual qualifications of the average country clergy were such as to bring great discredit upon the profession of Holy Orders. This was largely the result of the uncertainty of the last three reigns, which had driven out of the ranks of the clergy many of the most earnest and best qualified men, and had discouraged those who would have naturally entered Holy Orders.

Moreover, the necessity, in the earliest years of Elizabeth's reign, of supplying pastors to the many communities left without any ecclesiastical leader,² was so urgent that it forced bishops into filling up the vacancies with most injudicious haste. Parker, in 1559, ordained one hundred and fifty clergy in one day;³ Grindal ordained one hundred in his first month of office. The results were most disastrous. Large numbers of those ordained were quite unqualified, and served only to degrade their order in public estimation. They were held in general contempt.

1. Mr. Arthur Acheson would add Chapman to their number, suggesting that he may have kept school "on the hill next Hitchen's left hand," so as to qualify himself for identification with Holofernes, who educated youth at the change-house "on the top of the mountain." ("Shakespeare and the rival Poet," p. 110 *seq.*) [A.W.P.]

2. In the period 1560 to 1563 enquiries ascertained that in Colchester ten parishes were vacant, and "all together would not make three men's livings." In Winchester eleven out of fourteen parish churches were vacant. Frere, "The English Church under Elizabeth and James I." (1904), pp. 103-5.

3. Frere. "Eng. Church under Elizabeth and James I," p. 60.

"Some do bestow advowsons of benefices upon their bakers, butlers, cookes . . . and horsekeepers." ¹

They were ignorant: some of them "such as can scarcely read true English." And many of them were of unclean life, utterly unfitted, even morally, for their office: "They will read you their service . . . and when they have done they will to all kinds of wanton pastimes and delights . . . and all the week after, yea, all the year . . . they will not stick to keep company at the alehouse from morning till night, tippling and swilling." They are "fitter to feed hogs than Christian souls." ²

Undoubtedly the zealous efforts of the higher clergy and the government did much gradually to improve this situation. Already, by 1577, Harrison notes a considerable advance in intellectual qualifications; men are no longer ordained upon such slender acquirements as availed twelve or fifteen years before, "when there was small choice." ³ He is even enthusiastic as to the learning and zeal of the higher clergy at the time when he writes; but this is due largely to his patriotic pride in the fact that they are now chosen from among Englishmen, and are no longer "strangers especiallie out of Italie." ⁴ It was more than ten years afterwards that Ponsonby published Spenser's bitterly satiric sketch of the country parson in "Mother Hubbard's Tale" (published 1591):

. . . Read he could not evidence, nor will,
Ne tell a written word, ne write a letter,
Ne make one title worse, ne make one better:
Of such deep learning little had he neede,
Ne yet of Latine, ne of Greeke, that breede
Doubts mongst Divines, and difference of texts,
From whence arise diversitie of sects,
And hateful heresies, of God abhorr'd:
But this good sir did follow the plaine word,

1. Harrison. "Description of England" (New Shaks. Soc., part i, p. 26).

2. Philip Stubbes. "Anatomy of Abuses" (1583). (New Shaks. Soc., ii, p. 77.) The picture is doubtless a little overdrawn.

3. Harrison "Description of England" (New Shaks. Soc.), part i, p. 26.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

Ne medled with their controversies vaine:
 All his care was, his service well to saine,
 And to read Homelies upon holidayes;
 When that was done he might attend his playes;
 An easy life, and fit high God to please!

There was thus very little inducement for the man of attainments to select the career of parish priest, though it is possible that, in the earlier years of the period, he would have been readily beneficed.

But when we come to investigate the value of the average benefice, we are no longer surprised that few writers should appear to have even dreamed of qualifying for one. The poverty of the clergy is a standing topic. It supplies upon one occasion a telling simile for Dekker, who describes a footpath as being "beaten more bare than the livings of Churchmen."¹ The same writer published a small collection of private prayers, including one for the clergy, which reveals incidentally the light in which they were commonly regarded—as objects for charity! "As they break unto us," runs the prayer, "the bread of life (which Thou sendest . . .) so grant (O Lord) that we may not suffer them to starve for earthly bread, but that like brothers we may relieve them."²

Harrison testifies that "the greatest part of the more excellent wits choose rather to employ their studies unto physike and the lawes, utterlie giving over the studie of the Scriptures, for feare least they should in time not get theire bread by the same."³

Ten, twelve, thirty pounds at most, is the common net annual value of a living.⁴ Stubbes says they range as

1. Dekker. "News from Hell." "Works," ed. Grosart, ii, p. 98.

2. "Four Birds of Noah's Ark." "Works," v. 49.

3. Harrison, *ut supra*, p. 37.

4. John Thornton asks for the vicarage of Helmsley, worth £26 12s. 4d. yearly; he would keep a school for further maintenance [April, 1578]. The vicarage of Newark is worth "above twenty pounds" [1587]. Hist. MSS. Comm. XII., App. iv, (Rutland MSS.), Vol. i, pp. 116, 224. Thirty pounds was considered by the Commissioners a satisfactory stipend for a "godly learned preacher" at Ripon, and fifteen pounds for an assistant minister. These salaries were in addition to assigned lodgings. Duch. of Lancs. Survey 32 Eliz. See Hubert Hall, "Society in the Elizabethan Age," p. 172. But in considering the value of these livings, the remarks following must be taken into account.

low as £5, £4, and even £2 a year, "Yea, and table themselves also of the same."¹ The whole first year's income has to go to the crown, besides a yearly tenth; so that out of a benefice of £20, "the incumbent thinketh himself well acquitted if all ordinarie payments being discharged, he may reserve £13 6s. 8d. towards his own sustentation, and maintenance of his family."² We are sufficiently familiar with the facts as to clerical incomes at the present day, but this is as if the *majority* of livings at the present day were worth from £60 to £80.

Nor are these legal payments all that are incurred by the unhappy parson. Patrons, infected with the prevalent greed or need of money, demand heavy fees from the unlucky incumbent, amounting at times to as much as three-fourths annually of the total income. They will reduce £40 to £10 by their exactions.³ The patron will covenant that

If the living yearly do arise
To fortie pound, that then his youngest son
Shall twentie haue, and twentie thou hast wonne,
Thou hast it wonne, for it is of franke gift.⁴

In 1609, Ralph Cleaton, curate-in-charge at Buxton, possessed the large income of £5—all the tithes going to the patron.⁵ Or they demand the payment of a lump sum down. "Stake three yeares income; no man asketh more," says the ironic Joseph Hall.⁶ That excellent witty satire, the "Returne from Parnassus" (1601) has

1. "Anatomie of Abuses" (1583). New Shaks. Soc., ii, 75.

2. Harrison. "Descr. Eng.," Part i, 24.

3. Philip Stubbes. "Anatomy of Abuses" (1583), part ii, 80. New Shaks. Soc.

4. Spenser. "Mother Hubbard's Tale."

5. Lodge. "Illustrations of History," iii, 390.

6. "Virgidemiarum vi Libri," (1597-8), Book II., Satire v. The newly-appointed Bishop of Sarum is said to have paid to the Duke of Buckingham £3,500. See A. Welldon, "Court and Times of James I." ed. 1650, p. 129.

an amusing scene treating of this theme, employing for the purpose the conventional echo-motif :

Acad. Faine would I haue a liuing, if I could tel how to come by it. *Eccho.* Buy it.

. . . *Acad.* What, is the world a game, are liuings gotten by playing? *Eccho.* Paying.

Acad. Paying? but say what's the nearest way to come by a liuing? *Eccho.* Giving.¹

Unfortunate vicars, unable to keep house upon their scanty stipends, were driven to lodge at the ale-house; one, in despair of making ends meet, even begs to be allowed to sell ale himself.² Nash had probably sufficient grounds for his irritating sneer at Gabriel Harvey's parson brother Richard, whom he called "a dolefull foure nobles curate, nothing so good as the confessor of Tyburne," declaring that he "hath scarce so much ecclesiasticall living in all as will serve to buy him crewell strings to his bookes, and haire buttons."³ We know that the poor fellow had to eke out his living by recourse to the lowest form of writing — astrological almanacs !

It is true that during the later years of Elizabeth, and under James I, matters somewhat improved. In point of learning, morality, and social status great reforms were effected, and it is probable that under Charles I and Laud still more was done. In 1633 we find a certain Hugh Thomson receiving a stipend of £60 upon his entry into the ministry, a sum raised later to £100.⁴

The foregoing remarks will have made it clear that, could an aspirant to literary fame have succeeded in

1. "Parnassus Plays," ed. Macray, part ii, p. 98.

2. Lodge. "Illustrations of History," iii., p. 391.

3. "Have with you . . ." "Works," Vol. iii, 14.

4. Egerton MSS. 784 [Brit. Mus.]. It should be remarked that it is not clear whether Thomson was an Anglican pastor, or belonged to one of the various dissenting sects. In 1640 the "minester of Brocalbe received thirty pounds a year"—though it had been reported that the income was fifty pounds. Letters of Lady Brilliana Harley, "Camden Society Publ.," 1854 (Old Series). An "able divine" is promised an income of £100 in 1658. *Ibid.*, p. 237.

obtaining a benefice, the inevitable sacrifice of congenial society, and of access to books, and the social ignominy incurred, were amply sufficient to deter him, even had the financial gain been much more considerable than is apparent. In fact, out of about a hundred and ten writers, only nine appear to have taken holy orders, and three only of these can be called professional writers.¹

Hakluyt almost certainly endeavoured by his writings to attract patronage, and he actually held several ecclesiastical preferments. Shirley, at one time a "minister," seems to have abandoned that calling when he "set up for a play maker." Marston's abandonment of drama for the Church only serves to show that the literary career was not found thoroughly compatible with the clerical.²

1. They are : Andrewes, Donne (not a professional writer in our sense), Fleming, Hakluyt, Hall, Harrison, Marston, Meres, and Shirley.

2. Herrick probably lost his chaplaincy to the expedition to the Isle of Rhé (1627), and obtained his living in Devonshire (1629) on the score of his early verses. But he bade a formal "farewell unto Poetrie" when he was presented to a cure of souls, and it is noteworthy that it was not until about the time of his ejection from his living (1648) that he printed his poems.

CHAPTER VI.

PERSONAL RELATIONS AMONGST AUTHORS.

"I have ever cherished my good opinion of other men's worthy labours."—WEBSTER, "The White Devil" (pr. 1612), "To the Reader."

"How I do love thee, Beaumont, and thy Muse!"—

—JONSON, *Works*, ed. Gifford (1816), vol. viii, p. 180.

Forbear to tempt me, Prowle, I will not show

A line unto thee, till the world it know.

—JONSON, *Works*, ed. Gifford (1816), vol. vii, p. 195.

THE period under consideration was marked by the gradual rise of a fellowship of authors which affords a strong contrast to the comparative isolation of English writers of earlier days. Various causes, among them the declining importance of the great baronial families, the rise of a prosperous citizen class of readers, and the practical restriction of printing and publishing in London, all combined to concentrate literary production in the capital. And London in the sixteenth century was very far from being the vast agglomeration of heterogeneous districts now known to us. It was no more populous than Bradford, in the present day;¹ and all its life centred around two points—The Exchange, and St. Paul's. It was perfectly possible, even inevitable, that most men of any kind of distinction should be well known to each other and to the public. This was especially the case with writers, whose profession is such as to

1. In 1592 the population of London was estimated at some 300,000 souls. See W. B. Rye, "England as seen by Foreigners in the Days of Elizabeth and James I." (1865), p. 272.

attract notice to them. Hence we find existing a society of literary men which exhibits all the characteristics of a small intimate community. They display a close knowledge of each other's habits, dress, and conversation, and they allude to each other by initials, and nicknames, or by the mention of small personal peculiarities—certain of being understood, not only by the person alluded to, but also by most of their readers. "Who in London hath not heard," says Gabriel Harvey, "of his [Greene's] dissolute and licentious living, his fonde disguisinge of a Master of Arte with ruffianly haire, unseemely apparel, and more unseemelye company?"¹ Everyone in the reading and theatre-going fraternity knew Jonson's pock-pitted face and burly figure. There was thus some point, if also some coarseness, in the scene in the *Satiromastix*, in which Dekker twitted Jonson with the defects of his personal appearance,—his face "puncht full of oylet-holes, like the cover of a warming-pan," or "like a rotten russet apple, when 'tis bruised."² The reading public doubtless shared in the curiosity felt by his fellow-artists concerning the retired scholarly poet, Samuel Daniel, who was wont to "lie hid at his garden-house in Old Street" for months together, "as the tortoise burieth himself all the winter in the ground."³ Marlowe's imputed atheism aroused widespread hostility; Drayton's rebuff from King James was so well known that it caused his friendship to be none too welcome to fellow-writers, as he bitterly complains.

I scarce dare praise a virtuous friend that's dead,
Lest for my lines he should be censured.
It was my hap, before all other men,
To suffer shipwreck by my forward pen.

He next my God in whom I put my trust,
Had left me trodden lower than the dust.⁴

1. G. Harvey. "Foure Letters." Works, ed. Grosart, Vol. i., p. 168.

2. Dekker. "Dramatic Works," ed. Pearson (1873), Vol. i, pp. 260, 241.

3. Fuller. "Worthies of England" (1662). See under "Somerset," pp. 28-9.

4. "Elegy to Mr. Geo. Sandys" (in folio of 1627).

The whole town maliciously relished the humour, conscious or unconscious, of the parodying of majestic Ben Jonson by John Taylor, the lowly Thames water-man, risen poet. When the great Ben took his famous journey into Scotland, he was followed afar off by this humble imitator, to the joy of all London. Taylor was at pains later on to explain that his journey was not undertaken "either in malice or in mockage;"¹ but the town clung to its jest.

As to the writers themselves, evidence of the intimate nature of their intercourse is afforded by these well-known lines by Thomas Heywood, on the use of familiar names.

Greene, who had in both Academies tane
Degree of Master, yet could never gaine
To be called more than Robin, who, had he
Profest aught save the Muse, serv'd and been free
After a seven-yeares' prenticeship, might have
(With credit too) gone Robert to his grave.
Marlo, renowned for his rare art and wit,
Could ne're attaine beyond the name of Kit,
Although his Hero and Leander did
Merit addition rather. Famous Kid
Was called but Tom. Tom Watson, though he wrote
Able to make Apollo's self to doate
Upon his Muse, for all that he could strive,
Yet never could to his full name arrive.
Tom Nash (in his time of no small esteeme)
Could not a second syllable redeeme.
Excellent Beaumont, in the foremost ranke
Of the rar'st wits, was never more than Franck.
Mellifluous Shakespeare, whose enchanting quill
Commanded mirth or passion, was but Will;
And famous Johnson, though his learned pen
Be dipt in Castaly, is still but Ben.
Fletcher and Webster, of that learned packe
None of the mean'st, yet neither was but Jacke.
Dekker's but Tom; nor May nor Middleton;
And he's now but Jacke Ford that once was John.²

1. John Taylor. "The Pennilesse Pilgrimage" (1618). Preface.

2. Heywood. "Hierarchy of Angels" (ed. 1635), book iv, p. 206.

Fuller's story of the "wit-combats" at The Mermaid between Shakspeare and Jonson bears the impress of truthful gossip:¹ "Many were the wit-combats betwixt him and Ben Jonson, which two I behold (*sic*) like a Spanish Great Galleon, and an English Man-of-War; Maister Johnson (like the former) was built far higher in learning; solid, but slow in his performances. Shakspeare, with the English Man-of-War, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his Wit and Invention." There is plenty of evidence for the fraternal gatherings of the "Disciples of Ben";² and we know that Marlowe and Kyd were so intimate as at one time to have lived and worked in the same room together, and that Kyd got into trouble on account of an unorthodox paper of Marlowe's which was found amongst his own papers.³

Such close familiarity amongst writers naturally favoured the practice of collaboration; a custom which the necessities of the theatres and of writers themselves rendered especially common in dramatic writing. All dramatists collaborated; some, such as Beaumont and Samuel Rowley, have left nothing written alone. Even the independent, censorious Jonson wrote with others at times, though in one instance at least, when publishing, he conscientiously replaced his fellow dramatist's work by scenes of his own writing.⁴

Notable exceptions to this clannishness among writers were Daniel and Donne. The former lived, as has been said, a retired life, in the household of his patrons, or in his own home. He was "dear friends" with Florio, but Florio was a writer occupying a position similar to Daniel's own,—both lived apart from the restless clan of

1. Fuller. "Worthies of England" (1662). See under "Warwickshire," p. 126.

2. See especially Herrick's "Ode to Jonson."

3. This at least is the story as told by Kyd. See paper on Marlowe and Kyd, published by F. Boas, in "Fortnightly Review," Feb., 1899.

4. See Preface to "Sejanus" (pr. 1603).

writers in the city. Donne never cared to be regarded as a writer, and must have held himself aloof from all literary intimacies. He never alluded to the many great writers of his day, ignoring even Drayton, whom he must have known, and all the circle of famous men who surrounded his own patroness, the Countess of Bedford. The only fellow-writer whom he honoured with his notice was Ben Jonson.¹

The literary intimacy described is the source of some of the difficulties that beset the study of Elizabethan literature. Its extreme allusiveness has left for the student of to-day many a problem where was for the contemporary reader merely an open riddle. We know why Gabriel Harvey was furious when Nash reminded him of his father's lucrative occupation—ropemakers thrived when hangings were so common! But we have lost the key to many of the taunts by which Harvey and Nash exasperated one another. We have long recognised with interest Greene's jibes at the "upstart Crow beautified with our feathers" . . . who "is in his owne conceit the only Shake-scene in a countrie;"² but we have only made out by patient investigation the objects of Nash's contemptuous allusion to "those who leave the trade of Noverint whereto they were borne," and "like the Kidde in Æsop . . . forsooke all hopes of life to leape into a new occupation."³ We are even still uncertain who is the "rival poet" of Shakspeare's sonnet.⁴ We are doubtful who is meant by "Young Juvenall, that byting satirist, that lastlie together with me writ a

1. See E. Gosse. "Life of John Donne" (1899), Vol. ii, p. 329-32.

2. "A Groatworth of Witte bought with a Million of Repentance" (1596). Greene's Works, ed. Grosart (1881-3), Vol. xii, p. 144.

3. Nash. "Epistle" prefixed to Greene's "Menaphon" (1589). See Greene's Works, vi, pp. 15, 16.

4. Sonnet No. 86 :

"Was it the proud full sail of his great verse
Bound for the prize of all-too-precious you
That did my ripe thoughts in their brain inherse,
Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew?"

comédie."¹ We are wholly ignorant of the objects of Chettle's denunciation in *Kind Hart's Dreame*,—the two ballad-mongers, son of "old Barnes the plumber," sent out into London streets to sell lascivious ballads, and thus spoil the market for honest writers' wares. They were doubtless familiar figures to most of Chettle's readers.²

In the drama, personal allusions are common. Public caricature upon the stage is sure of a welcome, on one condition,—that the audience be familiar with the personage caricatured; and that knowledge concerning celebrities which is nowadays purveyed for us by newspaper reports and photographs, it was safe then to assume as naturally common to all citizens. Jonson's audience knew, without the aid of newspapers and magazine articles, that in the person of Antonio Balladino, "pageant-poet to the city of Milan, . . . when a worser cannot be had,"³ he was ridiculing his rival in masque-writing, Antony Munday, and doubtless the sketch contained for them more humorous points than are obvious to us. If Shakspeare was in truth making fun of John Florio in the character of Holofernes,⁴ contemporary theatre-goers were doubtless able to relish the jest.

It is not surprising that extraordinary interest should have been shown in the personal quarrels of authors. Even the Martin Marprelate controversy (1588—90), burning as were the questions it discussed, owed a good deal of its popularity to its coarse personal banter and abuse. Such tit-bits of scandal and gossip as the following, concerning well-known personages, were sure to be highly relished :

"I have heard some cleargie men say that M. Bridges⁵ was a verie patch and a duns when he was in Cambridg."

1. Robert Greene. *Works, ibid.*, p. 143.

2. H. Chettle. "*Kind Hart's Dreame*" (? 1592). *New Shaks. Soc.* (1874), pp. 48—9.

3. "*The Case is Altered*" (pr. 1609). *Works*, ed. Gifford (1816), Vol. vi, Act I., sc. i, p. 325.

4. In "*Love's Labour's Lost*."

5. Mr. John Bridges was a learned opponent of the anonymous Martin Marprelate.

"Who abuseth the high commission? . . . John London¹ . . . Who hath cut down the elmes at Fulham? John London . . . Who goeth to bowles upon the Sabbath? Dumbe dunsticall John of Good London hath done all this."²

The most resounding of the literary squabbles which agitated Elizabethan and Jacobean life arose, however, out of some more reasonable basis than mere personal antagonism, and doubtless, some readers vaguely realised the questions of principle at stake. Below the surface of the acrimonious personalities of Nash and Harvey there lurked a genuine divergence of literary aim and outlook. Their dispute focussed in a strong light the everlasting antagonism of ideals between the University "scholar," and the "popular" writer. Harvey, as he shows himself in this dispute, is the typically narrow University pedant, arrogant, dry-as-dust, censorious, trusting to the weight of his learning to help him to bear down the upstart impudence of a renegade. And Nash is the self-confident, emancipated young man of the world, despising the other for his narrow outlook, and impudently flouting his pretensions to superiority. He makes fun of his opponent's "lawyers English" and "inckehornisms," his "hermaphrodite phrases, half Latin and half-English."³ He denies that to be a University man and a scholar confers any distinction in itself. St. John's College, Cambridge, [Harvey's own college] has many hundred perfecter scholars than Harvey, who have not "shakt off obscuritie."⁴ And he utterly repudiates Harvey's standards of literary judgment in style, preferring the effective and incisive, and the lively in matter, to all the carefully prepared, long-winded writing that University men may set forth. He

1. John Aylmer, Bishop of London.

2 See P. Dearmer. "Religious Pamphlets" (1898), pp. 116, 126-7.

3, "Strange Newes . . ." Nash. Works, ed. Grosart, Vol. ii, pp. 190, 199. These phrases are actually used about Gabriel Harvey's brother, but they apply to Gabriel himself.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 259.

jeers at Harvey's own lumbering style. "I talke," he says, "of a great matter when I tell thee of a period, for I know two severall periods or full points, in this last epistle, at least fortie lines long apiece."¹ Elsewhere he gives expression to his preference for nimble wit and spontaneity, as compared with more painstaking work. "Let other men . . . praise the mountain that in seaven years brings forth a mouse . . . give me the man whose extemporall vaine in anie humour will excell our greatest art-master's deliberate thoughts."² "Thy soule," he says, "hath no effects of a soule, thou canst not sprinkle it into a sentence, and make everie line leape like a cup of neate wine new poured out, as an orator must doe that lies aright in waite for men's affections."³

Harvey retorts with repudiation of Nash's own style as reckless, fantastic, unnatural. "Right artificialite . . . is not mad-brained, or ridiculous, or absurd . . . but deepe-conceited, but pleasurable, but delicate . . . not according to the fantastical mould of Aretine or Rabelays . . ."⁴ "The finest wittes prefer the loosest period in Mr. Ascham, or Sir Philip Sidney, before the tricksiest page in Euphues or Pap-hatchet . . . Where is the polisht and refined Eloquence that was wont to bedeck and embellish Humanity?"⁵ Nash's name is, he admits, "blazed abroad"; but he is famous only in the opinion of the "common sort," which "never goes far currant."⁶ The best characterisation of Nash's own views is given in a passage placed in his mouth by Harvey, and intended as an ironical self-condemnation.

"Till I see your finest humanitie bestow such a liberal exhibition of conceit and courage upon your neatest

1. *Ibid.*, p. 282.

2. "Epistle" prefixed to Greene's "Menaphon." See Greene's Works, ed. Grosart, Vol. vi, p. 17.

3. "Strange Newes," p. 250.

4. Harvey. "Foure Letters." Letter 3. Works, ed. Grosart, Vol. i., pp. 217-8.

5. "Pierce's Supererogation." Works, ii, p. 218.

6. Harvey. "The Trimming of Thomas Nashe." Works, Vol. iii, p. 31.

witts, pardon mee though I prefer one smart Pamflet of Knavery before the blundering volumes of the nine muses . . . You may discourse of Hermes . . . of Orfeus . . . and I wot not marvellous eggs in moone-shine; but a fly for all your flying speculations, when one good fellow with his odd jests, or one mad knave with his awke hibber-gibber (*sic*) is able to put downe twenty of your smuggest artificial men, that simper it so nicely and coylie in their curious points . . . Penniless hath a certayne nimble climbing reach of Invention, as goode as a long pole or a booke that never fayleth at a pinch . . . The bookworm was never but a pick-goose.”¹

In the same way, the great stage-quarrel between Jonson, and Marston and Dekker, arose in part out of the critical attitude assumed by the former in regard to his opponents’ literary work. Priding himself upon his careful “art,” his truth to nature, and his propriety of language, Jonson scornfully condemned Marston for bombastic, ranting diction, and blamed Dekker for his reckless want of art. In a realistic scene, which must have been irresistibly comic on the stage, he represented his enemies as forced to disgorge and spue out the hideous vocabulary with which they had loaded themselves.

Crisp. O, I am sick — !

Horace. A bason, a bason, quickly; our physick works.
Faint not, man.

Aris. O—*retrograde—reciprocal—incubus.*

Cæsar. What’s that, Horace?

Horace. *Retrograde, reciprocal, and incubus* are come up.

Gal. Thanks be to Jupiter!

Crisp. O—*glibbery—lubrical—defunct*—O — !

Horace. Well said; here’s some store.

Virgil. What are they?

Horace. *Glibbery, lubrical, and defunct.*

Gal. O, they came up easy! ²

1. Harvey. “Piers’ Supererogation.” Works, Vol. ii, pp. 62-4.

2. Jonson. “The Poetaster.” Works, ed. Gifford (1816), Act V., sc. i, pp. 527 . . .

Marston and Dekker retaliated by making fun of his laborious, careful workmanship. They showed him on the stage sitting in his study, hammering out with infinite pains and much self-satisfaction his laboured rhymes.

O me thy Priest inspire,
For I to thee and thine immortall name,
In—in—in golden tunes,
For I to thee and thine immortall name—
In—sacred raptures flowing, flowing, swimming, swimming;
In sacred raptures swimming,
Immortal name, game, dame, tame, lame, lame, lame, lame
.¹

Each side despised the methods and aims of the other, and their quarrel represents the antagonism of two schools of literary thought.

This quarrel, like that of Nash and Harvey, was complicated by other considerations. The genuine literary issues were obscured by personalities, by theatrical rivalries, and by hostility towards certain stage innovations to which Shakspeare alludes in his remarks in *Hamlet* about boy-players stealing the livelihood of older actors.² Motives even less creditable seem to have entered into some of Jonson's quarrels, if we may judge from the following undignified lines, "To my Detractor."

Fool, do not rate my rhymes; I've found thy vice
Is to make cheap the lord, the lines, the price.
But howl thou on. I pity thee, poor cur,
Till thou hast lost thy noise, thy foam, thy stir,
To be known what thou art, a blatant beast.³

It will readily be surmised by all who understand the difficult conditions of life in those days for the man who tried to earn a living by writing, that his relations with

1. "The Satiromastix" (1602). Dekker. *Dram. Works*, ed. Pearson (1873), Vol. i, pp. 191-3.

2. "Hamlet," Act II., Sc. ii.

3. Jonson. *Works*, ed. Gifford (1816), Vol. ix, p. 45 n. It is right to say that Gifford does not believe these to be Jonson's lines, and that they are usually omitted from his works.

his fellow authors were not infrequently disturbed by small bickerings and animosities. Jonson, of course, fell out with everyone in turn; even the dignified, peaceable Samuel Daniel was, he said, "at jealousies with him."¹ Drayton seems to have become somewhat embittered by his long, unsuccessful struggle to obtain the Court favour which fell so much more easily to others. Acrimonious allusions to backbiting enemies are far from uncommon. We may instance Lyly's complaint of the unfair criticisms of Euphues:—

"Divers there are, not that they mislike the matter, but that they hate the man, that will not sticke to teare Euphues, because they doe envie Lyly."² Dekker declared that envious opponents had tried to prevent the publication of one of his works. Chettle's unfortunate publication of the dying Greene's attack upon Shakespeare and others involved him in accusations of ill-will, from which he endeavoured to free himself by a full and frank apology. He declared himself as sorry "as if the original fault had beene my fault, because myself have seene his [*i.e.* Shakespeare's] demeanour no lesse civill than he excellent in the qualitie he professes."³

There were, however, worse temptations than to professional enviousness. Authors, most of them, suffered severely from penury, as has been seen, and there was much temptation to literary fraud. The standard of honour amongst them, except in the case of the exceptionally lofty-minded, seems to have been fairly low. A great abuse was plagiarism, against which the law, then and for very long afterwards, afforded no protection. This was by no means confined to the lower class of writers; in fact, it was so common that were it not for occasional angry protests or exculpations, we should be led to believe that it was regarded as legitimate. In any

1. D. Masson. "Drummond of Hawthornden" (1873), p. 96.

2. "Euphues and his England" (1580). Epistle to the Gentleman Readers.

3. H. Chettle. "Kind Hart's Dreame" (1592). New Shaks. Soc. (1874), p. 38.

case, it must be remembered that traditions of honour, on literary matters, could hardly yet have been formed; and moreover, that to borrow the substance of a story, a poem, a drama, was then not only lawful, as now, but very much more common, and writers had perhaps not learnt to draw the line very clearly between borrowing the substance and appropriating the form also. Mr. Sidney Lee's researches into the history of the sonnet have revealed how calmly and as a matter of course, writers "borrowed" from foreign sources. But they did not stop at this. Watson's and Breton's poems contain passages exactly alike. A whole sonnet and part of another, in Watson's "Tears of Fancy," appears as scattered quatrains and couplets—alike word for word—in Breton's "Countess of Pembroke's Passion."¹ Which poet was the thief it is not yet certain; but passages from the earlier poet, Gascoigne, are certainly appropriated by Watson. In John Lyly's "Euphues" the greater part of the letter on education called "Euphues and Ephebus" is a translation, unacknowledged, from Plutarch's *περὶ παιδων ἀγωγῆς*. Shakspeare—with what just ground for complaint is uncertain—was accused by Greene of being "beautified with our feathers."² Certain sonnets, almost certainly early work of Spenser's, were published as translations of work by Van der Noodt, the translator definitely stating, "I have out of the Brabant speech turned them into the English tongue."³ Dekker, whose genius should have placed him above the need to purloin, transferred, wholesale, passages from a forgotten book, Harman's "Caveat for Cursitors," to his own pamphlet, "The Bel-man of London."⁴ True, his own work is so incomparably more racy, and contains so

1. Nicholas Breton. Works, ed. Grosart, Vol. i. pp. lxviii. . . .

2. "A Groatsworth of Witte bought with a Million of Repentance" (1596). Greene, Works, ed. Grosart (1881-3), Vol. xii, p. 144.

3. See Spenser's Works. "Globe" ed. (1883), p. xx.

4. See Preface to Audley's "Fraternity of Vagabonds." New Shaks. Soc. (1876-80), p. xvi. See also Harman's "Caveat for Cursitors," *passim*.

much new matter, that one is tempted to condone the theft as we condone Sterne's later "borrowings" from Burton and others!

Amusingly naïve are the remarks of some authors upon this matter! Thomas Churchyard, after declaring that he "never rob'd no writer," followed this up with the remark,

Now must my Muse go borrow if I may
My betters' works, to fill my matter full.¹

John Taylor, the Water-poet, has some lines which possess interest here.

There doth a strange and true opinion run
That Poets write much worse then they have done

And that their daily doeings do reveal
How they from one another filch and steal.
As if amongst them 'twere a statute made
That they may freely use the thieving trade.
And some there are that will not sticke to saye
That many poets living at this daye
Who have the Hebrew, Latin, Greeke, at will.
And in the Italian, and the French have skill
These are the greatest thieves, they say, of all
That use the trade (or art) poetical

So whole books and whole sentences have been
Stol'n, and the stealers great applause did win,
And by their filching thought great men of fame
By those that knew not the right author's name.
For mine owne part
Unto such robbery I could never reach
Because I understand no foreign speech
Latin and French are heathen-Greek to me.

Should I from English authors but purloin
It would be soon found counterfeited coin.²

1. See Churchyard, "Verses to Readers" prefixed to "A Handful of Gladsome Verses" (1592). See "Fugitive Poetical Tracts," Series i, No. 31.

2. John Taylor. "Lines against Scandalous Aspersions." Works, publ. Spenser Soc. (1868-9), pp. 26-7.

But it would be most unjust to regard these plagiarisms, and these recriminations, as representing the more usual relation between literary men of this period. Evidence of warm friendships, and genuine admiration abounds also. Jonson's whole-hearted tribute to Shakespere ("I loved the man, and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any"¹) atones for many a somewhat carping criticism. Webster expressed generous admiration of his fellow-dramatists, whose work, he says, he has "ever truly cherished."² Drummond wrote to Drayton, in 1618, "I long to see the rest of your Polyolbion come forth, whiche is the only epic poem England, in my judgment, hath to be proud of."³ Many more such generous expressions might be quoted.

The custom of writing commendatory verses to be prefixed to one another's works seems indeed to have been rather a troublesome fashion than to be taken as an evidence of genuine literary approval. These verses served the purpose now served by the passages culled from newspaper critiques which are appended to advertisements of books. So common was it to write them that the mere omission of such formal praises was apt to be regarded as a proof of the existence of ill-feeling; and one of the first signs of the patching up of a quarrel between authors was the appearance of verses by one of them commending the other. Jonson declared that he was suspected of being no friend to Drayton, simply

Because who make the question have not seen
Those ambling visits paid in verse between
Thy Muse and mine, as they expect.⁴

Such verses were mostly, though by no means all, mere empty compliments, not to be taken as expressive of true estimate. Both Jonson and Harvey, for instance, admitted that they sometimes praised young writers beyond

1. "Discoveries." See Works, ed. Gifford (1816), Vol. ix, p. 175.

2. Webster. "The White Devil" (pr. 1612). "To the Reader."

3. D. Masson. "Drummond of Hawthornden" (1873), p. 84

4. "To Drayton." Jonson. Works, ed. Gifford (1816), Vol. viii, p. 343.

their deserts, with a view to encouraging them to greater efforts.¹ The former, however, probably did himself some injustice, for his eulogies suggest that he took a good deal of pains to confine his praise to points of real merit. In his lines on Breton, a second-rate writer whose value lay chiefly in unambitious truthfulness, he discriminatingly selected for commendation his avoidance of the fantastic and artificial.²

There were, of course, many grades amongst writers. Placing aside such as Sidney and other distinguished aristocratic writers, as not "professional" in our sense, there were, in the first place, such men as Daniel, Florio, Sir John Davies, Camden, Jonson, Spenser, Quarles, and, later, Beaumont and Fletcher,—men of some acknowledged social standing, patronised to a considerable extent, and regarded as fitly honoured by presentation to some kind of official position.

Then there were the men marked out by learning, self-respect, and force of genius, able, in varying degrees, to attract patronage, and command a reputation among the higher class of readers, but never attaining any permanent recognized social position. To this class belong such as Shakspere, Chapman, Drayton, Marlowe, Webster, Lodge and others.

Below these was a class of writers of some literary training and taste, many of them men of high abilities and aims, who, either in their lives or in their work, or in both, belied their higher literary instincts, and descended to cater at times for a class of readers less educated or of baser tastes. Among these were Robert Greene, Thomas Peele, Thomas Nash, Thomas Dekker, and Thomas Middleton.

And lastly, there were the men of mediocre ability or less, hack writers, without dignity or literary ambition, who wrote merely for the commonplace, the ignorant,

1. "Lines to Selden." Jonson. Works, *ibid.*, p. 365.

2. "In Authorem" (1600). Jonson. Works, ed Gifford (1816), Vol. viii., p. 350.

the coarse,—humdrum stories and anecdotes, coarse social sketches, doggrel verse, ballads and jigs. They varied in ability and worth, from Breton, the harmless facile poetaster and story-teller, to Elderton, the tipsy ballad-writer; and the class includes such men as Antony Munday, Samuel Rowlands, Tom Coryat, and John Taylor.

The interesting point for the student lies in the fact that the members of these various classes of writers, so distinct in talent, aims, and, apparently, in status, were all rivals. In the present day, authors so widely differing can afford to disregard one another. The immense increase in the number of readers, during more than three centuries, has made it possible for literary men to confine their appeal to the tastes of a given class. The present-day poet knows that his circle of readers is unaffected by the popularity of a given sensational novelist; the novelist is untroubled by the immense sale of the "penny dreadful." But under Elizabeth and James, the number of readers was, comparatively, so limited, and their taste was so uncertain of itself, that every writer needed and hoped to appeal to the whole reading public. He was thus inevitably affected by every passing popular craze for another man's work, and hence men of genius not infrequently found themselves miserably contending for popularity against the veriest scribblers.¹ We shall see how untrained was the taste of even the more aristocratic who imagined themselves interested in poetry, as shown by their choice of extracts for their manuscript books of "selections."² Poor scribblers such as Nicholas Breton, Thomas Churchyard, Christopher Ocland, and Samuel Rowlands, enjoyed an immense reputation. Breton and Churchyard, at least, consorted upon terms of something like equality with men of undoubted genius. The better

1. It is not, of course, meant to suggest that men of genius have now never to contend with the preference of the public for mediocrity; what is meant is that the sale of Meredith's works is not affected by the popularity of the "shilling shocker." See chapter iii, p. 75; chapter v, p. 103.

2. See chapter vii, p. 148.

writers had to educate their own public to distinguish between work of genius and the veriest trash. Nash warned his readers that there is a difference between the Ballad-monger and the true poet, which they must learn to recognise. "If he love good Poets he must not countenance Ballad-makers; if he have learned Physicians, he must not favour horse-leeches and mountebanks." Jonson tried to bully his audiences into recognising good work when they saw it. "By —, 'tis good, and if you like't you may."¹

It was all very well. They knew that, to the average reader, printed work was all the same; and they knew, too, that the worst scribblers were often accepted as representative of the art, thus bringing into discredit the whole profession. Daniel wearily laments that

. . . So many so confusedly sing
Whose diverse discords have the music marr'd,
And in contempt that mystery doth bringe,
That he must sing aloude that will be heard.
And the received opinion of the thinge,
For some unhallowed stringe that vilely jarr'd,
Hath so unseasoned now the eares of men,
That who doth touch the tenour of that vein
Is held but vaine; and his unreckon'd pen
The title but of Levity doth gaine.²

Writers themselves were not always free from blame; in their own estimates of each other sometimes wilfully or unwittingly misleading the public. Harvey's wrong-headed parallel between Nash and Elderton will be referred to later.³ In the same spirit of malice he called Robert Greene and Elderton the ballad-writer "two notorious mates, and the very ringleaders of the riming and scribbling crew."⁴ Jonson maliciously, for he knew

1. "Cynthia's Revels" (1601). Jonson. Works, ed. Gifford (1816), Vol. ii, p. 382. Epilogue.

2. Samuel Daniel. "Musophilus" (1599), ll. 62 . . . Works, ed. Grosart (1885), i, p. 227.

3. See chapter vii, p. 156.

4. "Foure Letters" (1592). Harvey. Works, ed. Grosart (1884), Vol. i, p. 164.

better, coupled Dekker with Sharpam and Day, calling them all three "rogues," and he condemned Middleton, in company with Markham and Day,—two poets immeasurably below him,—as "not of the faithful [*i.e.* true poets]."¹

On the other hand they accepted into their fellowship in art men of talent so inferior as to be far unworthy. The quality of Thomas Churchyard's work may be guessed at from his own words. "Finding myself," he says, "unfurnished of learning and barely seen in the arts liberal, and far unfit to touch or treat of Divinity . . . I saw mee most able to bring forthe some acceptable work, not striving to shew anie rare invention, that passeth a meane man's capacity, but to utter and revive matter of some moment." This serves as prelude to a threadbare discourse upon Friendship.² Yet Thomas Nash, who prided himself upon exalting the conception of the literary art, declared that he admired Churchyard's "aged muse," swearing that in "Shore's Wife" he would still live after death."³

The writings of the time abound in complaints of the number and popularity of ballad-writers.

These fellowes are the slaunderers of the time,
Make ryming hateful through their bastard ryme.
But were I made a judge in poetrie,
They all should burne for theire vilde heresie⁴

"Every rednosed rimester is an author," says Martine Mar-Sixtus, "every drunken man's dreame is a book, and he whose tallent of little wit is hardly worth a farthing yet layeth aboute him so outragiously as if all Helicon had run through his pen. In a word, scarce a cat can look out of a gutter, but out starts a halfpenny chronicler, and presently "a propper new ballet of a strange sight" is endited. What publishing of frivolous

1. D. Masson. "Drummond of Hawthornden" (1873), p. 97.

2. "A Sparke of Friendship" (1588). Harleian Miscellany, I., iii, p. 251.

3. "Strange Newes." Nash. Works, ed. Grosart, Vol. ii, pp. 252-3.

4. "Epigrams," by I. C. (n.d.). New Shaks. Soc. (1874), p. 122.

and scurrilous Prognostications! as if Will Sommers were againe revived! What counterfeiting and cogging of prodigious and fabulous monsters! as if they laboured to exceed the poet in his metamorphoses. What lascivious, unhonest, and amorous discourses . . . yet they shame not to subscribe, By a graduate in Cambridge. In *Artibus Magister*.”¹ The writer is obviously aiming especially at the more frivolous and “popular” works of Greene and Nash, but it expresses the disgust felt by many better writers at the crowd of low-class scribblers, who usurped the realm of authorship. Breton, no very great genius himself, expresses the same feeling.

Ant. Shall we speak of Poetry?

Dina. What, Ballads? Why it is grown to such a pass that the E is taken out, and of Poetry it is called Pottry; why, verses are so common that they are nailed on every post; besides, it is a poor profession.

Mean. . . . If there were a fall of rich men there might be some work for them about Epitaphs; for if they be too busy with libels, they are put to silence for ever after²

Men of talent and reputation were driven by the competition of scribblers to speak of them with bitterest indignation. They inveighed perpetually against “red-nosed Elderton” and his tribe; at inferior self-styled scholars, who could “scarce Latinize their neck-verse,”³ and were mere “excrementory dish-lickers of learning.”⁴ They endeavoured to educate the public in discrimination by making fun of the poetaster’s topics. The really clever thing in poetry, they ironically say, is to be able to write verses on “nothing,”—on a Mouse, on the Death of a Thrastle, on Baldness, on the Lady Mayoress’s French Hood and Scarlet Gowne. They deride the ballad-maker’s “marvels,” such as “The Calf with Five Feet,” “The Raven sitting on the top of a

1. “Martine Mar-Sixtus.” Anon. (1592). Ded. Epistle.

2. Breton. “A Dialogue full of Pith and Pleasure” (1603). See Works, ed. Grosart, Vol. ii, j. 6.

3. Nash. Prefatory Epistle to “Menaphon.” See Greene. Works, ed. Grosart, Vol. vi, p. 15.

4. Nash. “Piers’ Penillesse.” Works, ii, p. 128.

Newe Kitchin," "Meeting the Devil in Conjure House Lane;" "The Witches bidding the Devil to Dinner at Derby."² Jonson devoted a whole drama to a merciless exposure of the unscrupulous and mendacious methods of the Chronigraphers, or writers of Newsletters and Pamphlets.³ These are not only ignorant themselves; they mislead and delude the reader. "They are so simple, they know not what they do; they no sooner spy a new ballad, and his name to it that compiled it, but they put him in for one of the learned men of the time." The wonder is that they do not thus spread the fame of the very serving men and writing-masters out of employ, who advertise their qualifications on the pillars in St. Paul's, and on the whipping-posts at the street corners."⁴ Dekker and Nash skilfully tried to discredit their rivals the makers of "prognosticating almanacs," and to spoil their market by writing witty parodies of Prognostications themselves."⁵

Naturally, neither vituperation nor mockery destroyed the scribbling tribe. Ballads and pamphlets and prognostications continued to be the staple reading of the less educated. In 1635 George Wither complained bitterly of the hundreds of pounds spent yearly on "vain songs and prophane ballads"; the stationers' warehouses contained then, he declared, thousands of them stored up.⁶ The only hope of men of genius lay in the growth of a more discerning taste, and more genuine literary interest among the upper classes; and this it was which, guided by the example of France, finally enabled them under Dryden and Pope, towards the close of the seventeenth century, to win for themselves a recognised status, and some chance of financial independence.

1. This is one of Elderton's ballads. See Nash, Works, Vol. iii, p. 197.

2. Jonson. "News from the New World" (1620). Works, ed. Gifford (1816), Vol. vii, p. 352.

3. "The Case is Altered" (pr. 1609). See also his masque "News from the New World" (1620).

4. "Pier's Penillesse" (1592). Nash. Works, ed Grosart, Vol. ii, p. 63

5. See Nash's "Prognostication," and Dekker's "Raven's Almanacke."

6. Wither. "Scholar's Purgatory" (? 1635), p. 19.

CHAPTER VII.

AUTHORS AND READERS.

"I have here set it down whole; and do heartily forgive
their ignorance whom it chanceth not to please."

—JONSON, "Masque of Hymen."

"But wrote he like a gentleman?"

". . . . He was paid for it,
Regarded and rewarded; which few poets
Are now-a-days."

"And why?"

"'Cause every dabbler

In rhyme is thought the same."

—JONSON, "Fortunate Isles" (1626),
Gifford (1816), vol. viii, p. 74.

THE foregoing pages have sketched in outline a somewhat dark picture of the life of the literary professional—harassed, suspected, poverty-stricken. Perhaps, it may be suggested, he derived some consolation and encouragement from living in an age of genuine literary interests? It is, indeed, a favourite commonplace that the age of Elizabeth and James I. was a literary and poetic age, and the statement has a meaning even wider than is usually attached to it. It was an age not only of abundant and striking productiveness, but also of fashionable interest in literature. It was the correct thing to discuss poetry. The Ordinary, where Gallants met together for social ends, was utilised almost as much as the bookseller's shop, for "conference of the best editions."¹ At Court, in polite society everywhere, ladies and gentlemen discussed the latest sonnet and the current pamphlet, and they besprinkled their talk with quotations, to prove their literary tastes. They tried to model their style of conversation upon "Euphues," or on the

1. Dekker. "Lanthorn and Candlelight," ed. 1609. Works, iii, p. 220.

"Arcadia"; or they even adopted the archaic vocabulary of Chaucer, as more striking and picturesque than their own. The private records of the time reveal a common habit of transcribing copies of verses: men kept commonplace books into which they entered verses that struck their fancy; they exchanged with their private friends manuscript productions, and printed poems and pamphlets. The approved method of courting a lady's favour, were she gentlewoman, citizen's wife, or kitchen wench, was by sending her a sonnet.¹

Moreover, it was customary for the refined to write verses themselves. Shakspeare laid the scene of "Love's Labour's Lost" in Navarre, but the king and his three companions, who show such facility in devising sonnets to their mistresses, are Elizabethan courtiers; and the verse-making Spaniard, Don Armado, is in this respect as genuinely English as the schoolmaster Holofernes, with his marvellous exploits in alliterative metre. Master Matthew, in "Every Man in his Humour," is an example of the would-be poetaster, driven for lack of ability to reciting as his own odds and ends of verse stolen from others. Dekker satirically advises the "gull" for whom his Horn Book is written, to "hoard up the finest play scraps you can get, upon which your lean wit may most savourly feed, for want of other stuff, when the Arcadian and Euphuized gentlewomen have their tongues sharpened to set upon you."²

In the higher circles, we must distinguish between the serious man of affairs, and the average courtier. The former could not afford to devote much time to the cultivation of belles lettres. As Languet reminded Sidney, the would-be statesman had to consider his prospects and how quickly he would have to abandon his "literary

1. "I have sent her toys, verses, anagrams,
Trials of wit, mere trifles she has commended,
But knew not whence they came, nor could she guess."
"This was a pretty riddling way of wooing."
—Jonson, "The New Inn," Act I., Sc. i.
2. Dekker. Works, ed. Grosart, ii, 204.

use."¹ There was even, in spite of—perhaps because of—its fashionableness, a prejudice in serious circles against an interest in poetry. The man who hoped for advancement in responsible political life did better, as Languet evidently thinks, to avoid too great an interest in literary matters. Jonson voices the sentiment in one of his *Masques*: "Oh, that rhyme is a shrewish disease, and makes all suspected it would persuade. Leave it . . . Rhyme will undo you, and hinder your growth and reputation in court more than anything beside . . . If you dabble in poetry once, it is done of your being believed or understood here . . ."² A man may patronise poets, serious, ambitious poets, but that is another matter; though Daniel seems of opinion that all verse is considered mere levity.³ Donne tried to shelter himself behind the example of "men who profess and practise much gravity;"⁴ but the uneasiness he betrays about his own poetry shows that he knew them to form a small minority among the lovers of the poetic art.

The taste of most of the devotees of poetry was extremely crude; discrimination was no strong point with them. They took pains to transcribe into commonplace books, they sent to their friends, "flashes of poetry" which prove to be the poorest trash. For instance, the Earl of Shrewsbury is favoured by a devoted correspondent with two tasteless sonnets in which he enlarges upon the inspiring topic:

"Court hath me now transformed into a clock."⁵

James Howell is requested to write for a friend some verses upon "his mistress black eyes, her becoming frowns, and upon her mask"; and he obligingly complies by sending some very ingenious and utterly

1. Fox Bourne. "Life of Sidney," p. 74 (22 Jan., 1574).

2. "Love's Welcome" (1634). See also "Barth. Fair." iii, 1.

3. "Civil Wars." Ded. 1609.

4. Gosse. "Life of Donne," i, 303-4.

5. Lodge. "Illustr. Brit. Hist.," iii, p. 169-70.

valueless lines.¹ Scarcely any of the private records of this time contain poems of literary value.

It is the same with the printed literature exchanged. "For lack of better matter," says John Chamberlain, "I send you 3 or 4 toys to pass away the time"; they are: a letter on Squire's conspiracy, a "ridiculous bable of an old imposturing juggler,"² some verses called *The Silkworm*, and Hayward's "*Treatise of Henry IV.*"³ He thanks a friend for supplies of "ballads, books, and babies," and sends in return "such pedlary pamphlets and threehalfpenny ware as we are served with," and "certain odd epitaphs and epigrams that go under the name of pasquils."⁴ The only exceptions to this exchange of trashy wares are the works of learned writers, such as Camden and Holinshed; or works of theological controversy.

Drayton expressly ascribes the neglect of great writers to the public taste for lower work.

Base baladry is so belov'd and sought,
And those brave numbers are put by for nought,
Which, rarely read, were able to awake
Bodies from graves
. . . . but I know ensuing ages shall
Raise her again who now is in her fall,
And out of dust reduce our scattered rhymes,
Th' rejected jewels of these slothful times.⁵

In the same spirit Jonson apologises for the delay in the publication of "*Neptune's Triumph*," on the ground that he preferred to wait till "the abortive and extemporal din" of balladry "were understood a sin."

The Muses then might venture undeterred
For thy love, then, to sing when they are heard.⁶

1. J. Howell. "*Epistolæ Ho-Eliaenæ*" (1629). Section V.

2. Dr. John Dee, the notorious astrologer.

3. J. Chamberlain. "*Letters*." (1 Mar., 1599). Camden Soc., Vol. lxxix., 1861.

4. Do. 17 Sept. and 8 Dec., 1598. In this year were published Chapman's "*Iliad*"; Drayton's "*Heroical Epistles*"; Hakluyt's "*Voyages*"; Hall's "*Virgidemiarum VI. Libri*"; Marlowe's "*Hero and Leander*"; Sylvester's "*Du Bartas*."

5. "To Master George Sandys."

6. Acted on *Twelfth Night*, 1624. Works, ed. Gifford (1816), Vol. viii., p. 28-9.

The literary titbits transcribed into private commonplace books consist almost without exception of ballads, satirical verses, and brief pamphlets, the interest of which lies entirely in their bearing upon contemporary events and characters. Such verses as are, apparently, copied for their own sake are usually of the most trivial and commonplace character.¹ Most men "term all that is written in verse poetry, and rather in scorn than in praise bestow the name of Poet on every base rymer and ballad-maker."²

An examination of a number of the ordinary private records of the period has discovered only two items of genuine literary interest. Nicholas Moore sends to John Fleming at Coniston "a play-book printed this term and

1. The following are specimens of verses to be found in contemporary commonplace books :—

Verses on modern luxury :

"Now fye on facions fond
That wastes both landes and see
In gawdes the glory, but of fooles
That leades the way to hell." (*Sic*).

Song of the rose, beginning :

"The rose is from my garden gone"

A "pleasant sweet song" beginning :

"In sommer tyme when Phebus rays"

—"Tempus," 1590-1603.

Political ballad beginning :

"The Scotchmen are but beggars yet,
Although their begginge was not small."

—"Tempus," James I. MSS. of J. H. Gurney. Hist. MS. Comm. XII., App. ix., 161.

Song : "Here lyes he that once was poore."

Song : "There was an ould laad roade on an ould jade."

On Raleigh : "O had thy name bene causer of thy death."

King James, his Verses on his Queene :

"Anne, wilt thou goe and leave me here!
O doe not soe, my dearest deare."

Comparing Buckingham with the soldiers of Elizabeth's time :

"The noblest brave profession
That ether is or hath bene
Was for to be a souldier true
And theire (*sic*) to live and die in."

—"Tempus," James I. MSS. of Southwell Cathedral Hist. MSS. Comm. XII., App. iv, p. 545.

2. Harington. Translation of "Orlando Furioso" (ed. 1591). Preface.

one of the newest, called Virgin Martin (*sic*);¹ and John Chamberlain records as a piece of Court gossip that "it seems young Davison means to take another course [than that of Secretary to the Ambassador in Paris] and turn poet, for he hath lately set out certain sonnets and epigrams."²

Much of this supposed interest in literature was, of course, the merest curiosity. Men liked to feel themselves abreast of the gossip of the day, and it is obvious that often the correspondent is simply prompted by the desire to show his intimate knowledge of the current news. "I do boldly send these things," says a correspondent to the Earl of Shrewsbury, referring to some enclosed verses "compounded by Mr. Secretary." "I would not do so to anyone else, for I hear they are very secret."³ There was gratification in the thought of being in the inner circle; "I think you will know the father," says the Duchess of Buckingham suggestively, enclosing some anonymous lines.⁴

Further evidence as to the literary interests of the day may be gathered, though but in scanty measure, from extant family account books and inventories. These contain, however, surprisingly few references to books. This is no doubt due, partly, to the incompleteness of the records relating to this period; but even where these are fairly full, the infrequency of book items is remarkable. It is certain that well-to-do households were often piteously unprovided with books, a fact which is illustrated amusingly by the following letter from an irate private tutor whose services were about to be dispensed with.

Peter Mease to Sir John Coke: ". . . . I always complained of the want of books. Your opinion was

1. Le Fleming MSS. Hist. MSS. Comm. XII., App. vii, p. 16 (Mar. 8, 1621-2). Massinger's "Virgin Martyr" was printed in 1621.

2. John Chamberlain. "Letters." Camd. Soc., Vol. lxxix, 1861, p. 146.

3. Letter by William Browne [not the poet]. 18 Sept., 1602. See Lodge, "Illustr. Brit. Hist."

4. Letter to her son. See Brewer, "Court of James I." (ed. 1839), p. 259.

that a few books might perfect a Divine. This was the difference between your genius and mine. . . . Only let me admonish you that whereas your children have learned on my books this two year and more, I shall not leave them behind me, you are therefore withal to provide them such books as your and the discretion of a provided tutor shall think fit. . . ." (*sic*)¹

The scanty records available reveal, however, one interesting fact, viz., the small proportion of English books in an average private library. Of course one might be prepared to find a preponderance of literary works in Latin, Italian, or French, but the scarcity of the English poets, for example, suggests either ignorance or blindness to the quality of English poetry. Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, Occleve, "Piers Plowman," are conspicuous by their absence. Very few even of the English books met with, moreover, are of purely literary value, they being generally works of history, erudition, and controversy. John, Viscount Lisle and Earl of Warwick, possessed in 1551 about forty books, including ten English ones.² The catalogue of books at Stafford Castle (1556) contains forty-one items, about one half in English.³ In the case of William Drummond of Hawthornden, himself an English poet, the proportion of English works in belles lettres is remarkably small. The catalogue of his books taken in 1610 records only fifty English books as against four hundred and forty-eight in other languages. It is true that his collection is more purely literary than most; some of the best English writers are included—Sidney, Spenser, Drayton, Daniel, Fairfax, etc. There are very few English dramas.⁴ In the accounts of the Duke of Northumberland for October

1. Hist. MSS. Comm. XII., App. i, p. 117. Cowper MSS.

2. Hist. MSS. Comm. II., App., p. 102. This includes such as "An English Testament," a book on "How to play at Chistis," "A Declaration of the Crede." The only "literary" books named are four plays by John Heywood.

3. "Bibliographica," iii, p. 150-1.

4. Masson. "Drummond of Hawthornden," p. 19. Towards the close of the century private libraries must have been much larger. Pepys possessed 3,000 volumes.

and December of 1601 there are fourteen items of expenditure in books, but not one of the purchases is a standard English work in belles lettres.¹ The Duke spent very large sums upon books, but there is scarcely a single English work of permanent literary interest to be found mentioned in his lists.² Notable exceptions are "The Shepherd's Calendar," and the "Mirror for Magistrates."³

The Library of Mr. William Whiteman contained a large number of standard literary works in Latin, Greek, French, and Italian, including Herodotus, Demosthenes, Aristotle, Marot, Du Bartas, Rabelais, Guicciardini, and others; but in English it contained only works in history, divinity, and philosophy.⁴ The solitary exception was Browne's "Religio Medici"; one is tempted to wonder whether the worthy owner bought this as a work on divinity!

Of course the absence of records of the purchase of English books is partly accounted for by the custom of presenting copies to patrons; but it indicates clearly enough that the public were not in the habit of expending money upon the productions of native writers.

Car, Earl of Somerset, formed a striking exception in his literary predilections, for his Library is said to have consisted simply of twenty play-books and romances. Such evidence of frivolous tastes drew down upon him sarcastic condemnation,—“a lord very likely to give good counsel!”⁵

The absence of any reference to books in Shakspere's will is a curious fact, of which explanation is difficult.

There is otherwise very little evidence of the inclusion

1. Hist. MSS. Comm. III., App., p. 44. Northumberland MSS.

2. See "Bibliographica," iii, pp. 153-4.

3. Hist. MSS. Comm. VI., App., p. 226. These occur amongst 21 items, the only other English book of note being Holinshed's "Chronicle."

4. The date of this catalogue is uncertain, but it appears to have been drawn up some time before 1645, and must have been later than 1641, as "Religio Medici" was published in 1642. Egerton MSS. 784 [Brit. Mus.].

5. Sir E. Peyton's "Catastrophe of the House of Stuart" (ed. 1811), p. 353.

of plays in the libraries of gentlemen, beyond the fact that our libraries of the present day possess copies which must have been preserved originally in private collections. The absence of reference to them shows, possibly, that they were regarded as purely ephemeral writings, not worthy of note. They must have been bought, and freely, by some classes of readers, since it undoubtedly paid to print them. Sir Thomas Bodley expressly stipulated that play-books should not be admitted into the Bodleian collection! "I can see no good reason," he said, "to alter my opinion for excluding such books as almanacs, plays, and an infinite number that are daily printed. . . . Haply some plays may be worthy the Keeping; but hardly one in forty. For it is not alike in English plays, and others of foreign nations, because they are most esteemed for Learning the Languages, and many of them compiled by men of great Fame for Wisdom and Learning; which is seldom or never seen among us. Were it so again, that some little profit might be reaped (which God knows is very little) out of some of our Play-books, the benefit thereof will nothing near countervail the harm that the Scandal will bring upon the Library, when it shall be given out that we stuff'd it full of Baggage Books. . . . The more I think upon it, the more it doth distaste me, that such kind of Books should be vouchsafed a room in so Noble a Library."¹

It is noteworthy that the Courtier class, with its professed interest in poetry, seems to have been quite oblivious to the literary quality of many of the masques written for their delectation. In the correspondence of the time, allusions to masques are fairly frequent, but a solitary reference to the author which is to be met with is not highly appreciative. Writing in 1605, John Chamberlain remarks, "The pastoral by S. Daniel was solemn and dull, but perhaps better to be read than

1. "Reliquiae Bodleianae" (1703), p. 278. Letter of June (? Jan.) 15 (? Anno).

presented.”¹ One of the most inspired passages of writing by Ben Jonson is the fine preface to “*Hymenæi*” where he protests against the popular prejudice which rates the “bodies” of masques higher than their “souls.”

Women could, in the later sixteenth century, be added to the number of those interested in reading. This was no doubt chiefly among the upper classes, the “gentlewomen” to whom R.B. dedicated “*A Petite Palace of Pettie his Pleasure*” (1576), and on whom Lyly relied with great success for popularity. Spenser published, among the seventeen sonnets prefixed to *The Faerie Queene*, two addressed to Court ladies and another to “all the gracious and beautiful ladies in the Court.” It is not quite clear to what extent reading prevailed among women of a lower class; obviously many citizens’ wives could read, though it was not usual for them to be able to write.² Nash reckoned upon women readers for his “*Anatomy of Absurditie*,” crediting them apparently, however, with little learning. He desired “of the learned pardon, and of women patience.” His enemy Gabriel Harvey boasted of at least one lady reader of remarkable education, for she had read, if he is to be believed, Homer, Vergil, Plutarch, Polyen (? Politian), Petrarch, and Agrippa.³ In spite, however, of the classical education of some women, there is no doubt that the greater number were very slightly educated, chiefly in Italian and French, and that their taste inclined towards a preference for slighter works, love-poems and romances. Hake complains that men bring up their daughters unwisely; either they are “altogether kept from the exercise of good learning and knowledge of good letters, or else . . . noused in amorous books, vain stories, and fond, trifling fancies.”⁴ No wonder

1. Quoted in D. N. B.

2. In “*Westward Hoe*” Dekker represents two city dames receiving private lessons from a writing-master. “*Dramatic Works*,” Pearson’s ed. (1873), ii. Act I., Sc. i, p. 292.

3. Harvey’s Works, ed Grosart, Vol. ii, p. 320

4. Edward Hake. “*A Touchstone*” (1574). Quoted by C. Edmonds in Introduction to Hake’s “*News out of Poules Churchyard*.”

that Drayton should fear lest the "unusual tract" of his long-winded *Polyolbion* "may perhaps seem difficult to the female sex."¹ According to Harrison, the taste of the Court ladies was apt to grow more serious with years. He describes the elderly ladies as reading scripture, or history, writing works of their own, translating into Latin or English.² Nor were all the younger women so entirely given up to the reading of frivolous romances as Hake would lead us to believe. Samuel Daniel reckoned confidently upon their reading his "*Civil Wars*," and apologised to youthful ladies for want of success in the drawing of *Queen Isabel*, in "not suiting her passions to her years."³ Possibly it was his desire to please their taste which led him to dwell with so much enthusiasm upon the love story of the young *Queen*. The search of records does not reveal much to us of their reading habits. The list of expenses of a Court lady in 1603 records the purchase of two books, both French; "ane French *Nou Testement*, with ane uder French bouk, 6/-."⁴

The reading class was, however, by no means confined to Court and gentry. A good provision of elementary and grammar schools ensured the means of learning to read for all who cared for it, and instruction in writing and the classics for a large number.⁵ There is evidence that the middle and lower classes availed themselves of these opportunities. It is not unusual to meet, in the records of Corporation Free Schools, with the complaint that children throng to be taught in such numbers that the schoolmaster cannot deal with them. Writers could therefore safely appeal to a circle of readers of all classes. Heming and Condell address their folio edition of *Shakspeare's* works (1623) to readers "from the most able to him that can but spell." Dekker's *Bellman* is

1. "*Polyolbion*," 1613. "To the General Reader."

2. Harrison. "*Description of England*" (ed. 1587). *New Shakspeare Society* (1877), Book ii, p. 272.

3. "*Civil Wars*" (1609). Dedication.

4. Hist. MSS. Comm. X., App. i, p. 32 (Eglinton MSS.)

5. See Chapter V.

described on the title-page as "Profitable for Gentlemen, Lawyers, Merchants, Citizens, Farmers, Masters of Households, and all sorts of servants, and delightful for all men to read." Jonson, in the "Address to the Reader" prefixed to his "New Inn," says, "If thou can'st but spell, and join my sense, there is more hope of thee than of a hundred fastidious impertinents. . . ." Country carters carried home in their pockets broadsides and pamphlets to be read by the way; citizens' apprentices stole moments from their work to bestow on the delectable reading of ballads and old romances. Dekker advertises his "Wonderful Yeare" as intended "to shorten the lives of long winters' nights, that lie watching in the dark for us."

As far as regards this section of the reading public, it is obvious that their interests would be confined entirely to English works; thus we find that the library of the well-known Captain Cox, the celebrated mason of Kenilworth, consisted entirely of old English romances, ballads, broadsheets and almanacs, with one or two more long-lived English works, such as "The Shepherd's Calendar," "The Ship of Fools," and "Hick Scorer."¹

A school practice which should have contributed to train an educated class of readers was that of teaching the boys to act plays, sometimes in Latin, sometimes in English. Ralph Roister Doister is generally believed to have been written for acting at school.² But there is at present not much evidence as to the literary character of English plays acted in schools; and there was a good deal of oppositon to the practice, to which Jonson represents one of his characters giving expression: "*Censure* . . . An there were no wiser than I, I would have ne'er a cunning schoolmaster in England. I mean, a cunning man a schoolmaster; that is, a conjurer, or a

1. Laneham's Letter (1575), ed. F. J. Furnivall (1907), pp. 28-30. It is amusing to note that the worthy Laneham credits Captain Cox with a knowledge of astronomy, apparently on the strength of his possession of "The Shepherd's Calendar."

2. Either at Eton or at Westminster.

poet, or that had any acquaintance with a poet. They make all their scholars play-boys! Is't not a fine sight to see all our children made interluders? Do we pay our money for this? We send them to learn their grammar and their Terence, and they learn their play-books!"¹ As for the acting of Latin plays, it was, like the reading of many Latin authors, quite contrary to the principles of the authorities; the Lords in Council would have preferred to substitute for these "heathen poets from the whiche the youthe of the Realme receyve rather infectyon in manners and education than advancement in vertue," the more innocuous modern Latin poems of the school-master, Christopher Ocland.²

Taken altogether, the circle of readers for whom the English author wrote, though not very large, was exceedingly mixed, and it is not remarkable that it should have appeared ignorant and indiscriminating. It may not be the case that the general public was quite unable to discern the difference between poetry and doggerel, between the racy pamphlets of Nash and Dekker and the humdrum descriptions of Tom Coryat; still the distinction was little understood. It was even not seldom wilfully ignored. Gabriel Harvey knew, probably, the deliberate unfairness of which he was guilty in penning the following parallel; he certainly reckoned upon many readers accepting it in full faith.

"He (Nash) disdaineth Thomas Delone, Philip Stubs, Robert Armin, and the common Pamfleters of London, even the painfulllest chroniclers, too; because they stand in his way, hinder his scribbling traffic . . . and have not chronicled him in their Catalogue of renowned modern authors. . . . But may not Thomas Delone, Philip Stubs, Robert Armin, and the rest of those persons more disdainfully disdain him; because he is so much vainer, so little learned, so nothing eleganter, than they; and

1. "The Staple of News," III, ii, end.

2. See "Acts of the Privy Council," ed. Dasent, vol. xiii, p. 389 (21 April, 1582).

they so much honester, so little obscurer, so nothing contemptibler than he.”¹

In yet another respect this Elizabethan public was far from ideal. With all his professed love for poetry, the Elizabethan gentleman despised the professional poet. The snobbishness which has always characterised more or less the English nation caused him to regard it as degrading to live by selling the product of one's labour, and it made no difference whether the labour were that of hands or brain. He made an exception, it is true, for writers of learned or controversial work, being impressed by the erudition required, and by their skill and utility; but to “live by verses” he considered a disgrace. “Thou call'st me Poet, as a term of shame,”² says Jonson. The word is used “as if it were a contemptible nickname.”³ Nash finds more galling than any other of Harvey's gibes the assertion that he relies on the printing-press to provide him with apparel and maintenance.⁴

The lamentable truth is that, in this great poetic age, the common conception of poetry was low and trifling. Writing a poem hardly ranked even with honest manual labour. Jonson complains that readers regard poets as little better than cooks, compounding tasty dishes to please the palate. The poet is “the most unprofitable of his (Majesty's) servants . . . a kind of Christmas ingine, one that is used at least once a year, for a trifling instrument of wit or so.”⁵ “Great men in this age,” says Sir William Alexander to William Drummond,

1. “Pier's Supererogation” (1593). Works, ed. Grosart, Vol. ii, pp. 280-1. It may be objected, in justification of the public taste, that Spenser met with full and hearty recognition. This was certainly the case in aristocratic and literary circles; the evidence is unanimous. But Spenser followed, he did not originate, the fashion; he was the friend of the national idol, Sir Philip Sidney; and the evidence of his his being read by those below Court circles is small. Jonson says his work was not appreciated, and he died in poverty.

2. Epigrams. “To my Lord Ignorant.”

3. Jonson. “Discoveries.” Gifford (ed. 1816), Vol. ix, p. 162.

4. “Pier's Supererogation.” Works, ii, 243.

5. Jonson. “Neptune's Triumph.”

"either respect not our toys at all, or if they do, because they are toys, esteem them only worthy the kiss of their hand."¹ According to Daniel's opinion, it is the over-throwing of

". . . that holy reverent bound
That parted Learning and the Laity"

that has cheapened the estimate of literary genius.²

Anyway, poets were no worse off than their fellow artists, the painters. Very diverting is now the horror with which Balthazar Gerbier, writing to the Duke of Buckingham, a great collector of pictures, repudiates the charge of being himself an artist. "I swear to God," he declares, "that I was never a painter till I placed myself under your patronage, leaving the Prince of Orange; and come what will, I will never be one; poverty shall change neither my blood nor my courage."³ It must be confessed, in extenuation, that he was living amongst a people so blind to the value of great works of art, that they scoffed at Buckingham when he bought masterpieces, for throwing away money on "bobles (*sic*) and shadows."⁴

The dramatist was, if possible, in even worse case than poet or painter. Since many dramatists were actors, and most of them played an active part in rehearsals, the two callings were apt to be regarded as one, and the playwright shared in much of the obloquy attaching to the actor's profession. It was not by a mere legal technicality that "players" were regarded as rogues and vagabonds.⁵ Shakspeare, as has been shown already, betrays a bitter consciousness of his humiliating social position, describing himself as "in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes," and grieving

1. Masson. "Drummond of Hawthornden," p. 120.

2. "Musophilus," ll. 689 (*seq.*).

3. Brewer. "Court of James I." (ed. 1839), Vol. ii, p. 392. (Gerbier was in Buckingham's service from 1616 to 1628.)

4. Brewer. "Court of James I." (ed. 1839), Vol. ii, pp. 370-71

5. See chapter iv, p. 97, note 4.

that the goddess has placed him in a profession from which his "name receives a brand."¹ In vain the choicer spirits among playwrights, such as Chapman, himself a classical scholar of note, protest that

The stage and actors are not so contemptfull
As every innovating puritan

Would have the world imagine.²

Gall and wormwood were the portion of the self-respecting writer whose chief means of livelihood was the drama.

But the low esteem in which professional writers were held cannot be ascribed entirely to the snobbish ignorance of the public. Some of the blame must attach to their own habits, often licentious and dissipated. They were but too commonly guilty of that vice of the age—excess in drinking; the charge is reiterated again and again, even by the friendly. Drayton is expressly singled out as an exception; he "wants one true note of a poet of our time, and that is this, he cannot swagger it well in a tavern, nor domineer in a hot house."³ For the rest,—“A passing potman, a passing Poet.”⁴ Poets are regarded as “drunken parasites.”⁵ The general public made no fine distinctions; as was natural, they judged the whole class by the most conspicuous and worst examples, so that to the average man poets were simply the “beggarly wretches” he met, who would “hang upon a young heir like a horse-leech,”⁶ or who, with “slovenly tattered sleeves,” could be seen wandering and selling “ballets in the streets.”⁷

Moreover, when considering the prevalent prejudice against writing for the press, we must not omit to notice

1. Sonnets, 29, 111.

2. “Revenge of Bussy d’ Ambois, Act i, Sc. i. “Works,” (ed. Herne Shepherd, 1889), p. 184.

3. “Returne from Parnassus” (1601), ed. Macray, p. 85.

4. Nash. “Anatomy of Absurditie (1589). “Works,” i, 45.

5. Nash. “Summer’s Last Will.” “Works,” vi, p. 141.

6. Jonson. “Staple of News,” I, ii. Gifford, ed. 1816, v, p. 196.

7. Nash, *ibid.*

the fact that authors probably shared in some of the odium caused by the malpractices of cheating publishers, who not infrequently cozened the reader by re-issuing old works with new titles, and binding up unsaleable work with others for which there was plenty of custom.¹

It does not appear that the general contempt for professional writers was based upon their being drawn chiefly from the lower social strata. Only a very small number of the poets whose names have come down to us are known to have been of really humble origin. It is difficult to draw the line between professional and amateur, but among those who appear to have made the writing of poetry an important part of their life we find that there is a large majority drawn from the ranks of the country gentry, the professions and the rich merchant class.² Among dramatists the proportion is lower; out of twenty-nine, eleven only may be regarded as belonging to the "gentry," fourteen were the sons of citizens, rich and poor, or of lower class still; the rest are of unknown origin. Such facts go very little way towards explaining the lowly position held by the professional writer, whether poet or dramatist.

Writers themselves, with the exception of that sturdy self-respecter Ben Jonson, are apt to assume an attitude of humility. Spenser, though of gentle birth, was humbly proud of the acquaintance of Sir Edmund Dyer and Sir Philip Sidney. "They have me, I thank them," he says to a friend, "in some use of familiarity."³ George Wither openly admits the "despisedness" of his "person and quality," though he maintains that this does not render him less fit than Sternhold and Hopkins (grooms of the Privy Chamber) to write hymns.⁴

On the other hand, writers who are in a position to do so carefully insist upon their gentility. Nicholas Breton

1. See Nash. "Strange Newes." "Works," Vol. ii, p. 286.

2. See Appendix.

3. See G. Harvey. "Works," ed. Grosart, i, pp. 7-8.

4. "A Scholar's Purgatory," pp. 40, 53.

describes himself as "gentleman" in his title-pages and dedications. Nash's "Piers Penilesse" is announced as by "Tho. Nash, Gent."; and though Harvey enquires sneeringly what special cause "the Pennilesse Gentleman has to bragge of his birth," he does not deny him the title;¹ moreover, Nash himself, while calling it "vaine," vindicates his right to it.² Drayton makes a point of using his title "Esquire," and is in consequence derided by bluff Jonson. "Every poet writes squire now";—the implication is that the title has lost much of its value by the practice.³ In "The Puritan," scant work is made of the pretensions of the poet to be regarded as a gentleman. "You a gentleman! That's a good jest, i' faith. Can a scholar be a gentleman, when a gentleman will not be a scholar?"⁴

That the amateur poetaster was far from being flattered by being classed with real poets is evident from the words of L.N.'s "Address to the Reader," prefixed to the collection of poems called "England's Helicon" (1600). It contains poems both by gentlemen amateurs and by professional writers, and he asserts boldly, in opposition to current opinion, that no man ought to "take it in scorn that a far meaner man in the eye of the world shall be placed by him." L.N. has his own opinion of the worth of the true poet's work: the names of poets, he declares, can be fitly placed side by side with those of the greatest princes of the world. "If any man take exception to this," he declares him "unworthy to be placed by the meanest that is but graced with the title of a poet." These are such words as we are accustomed to think suitable in the great Elizabethan age; but they form, in reality, an exceptional protest.

1. Harvey. Letter "3." "Works," ed. Grosart, i, 206.

2. "Strange Newes." "Works," ed. Grosart, Vol. ii, pp. 256-7.

3. "Magnetic Lady." Introduction. The application may be questioned because the play is generally held to have been first performed in October, 1632, and Drayton died in December, 1631. But the play is mentioned in a letter by J. Howell dated January, 1629.

4. "The Puritan." Act. ii, Sc. iv.

Elizabethans may have vaunted the poetry; they despised the poet.

(It was to avoid the suspicion of living by his pen that the gentleman-poet refrained from publishing. Publication was decried as undignified and unworthy of a gentleman. "It is ridiculous," says the learned Selden, "for a lord to print verses; 'tis well enough to make them to please himself, but to make them public is foolish. If a man in a private chamber twirls his band-string, or plays with a rush to please himself, it is well enough; but if he should go into Fleet Street, and sit upon a stool and twirl a band-string, or play with a rush, then all the boys in the street would laugh at him."¹

Unfortunately, men who should have better understood the dignity of their art were sometimes led to defer to this judgment, and to make excuses and apologies for publishing. John Donne, whose father had been a prosperous ironmonger, acknowledges it as a serious fault in himself "to have descended to print anything in verse." He wonders how he declined to it, and cannot pardon himself.² Two years later, in 1614, we find him again about to publish, and again ashamed of it. "One thing more I must tell you," he says to Sir Henry Goodyer, "but so softly that if that good lady [Lady Goodyer] were in the room with you and the letter, she might not hear. It is that I am brought to a necessity of printing my poems. . . . I am at an end of much considering. . . ."³ Nash, when sneered at for earning his livelihood by publishing, regards it as a disgraceful accusation, and cares only to clear himself; he has earned nothing by publishing for three years!⁴ Samuel Daniel, though he published willingly enough, seems to have preferred the subscription method, and he did not like his dramas to be regarded as acting plays. He would

1. Discourse of John Selden, Esq., ed. S. H. Reynolds, 1892, pp. 135-6.

2. E. Gosse. "Life of Donne," i, 303-4.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

4. "Works," ed. Grosart. "Have with you to Saffron Walden," Vol. iii, p. 189.

not have put "Philotas" on the stage, had not his necessities "overmastered" him.¹

To add to the smarting consciousness of social inferiority there was further the knowledge that the very men who looked down upon the writer were at the same time serious competitors with him. Had there been no other reason—no prestige attaching naturally to the work of a gentleman of distinction—the secrecy with which manuscript poems were handed about, transcribed, and talked of, would have rendered them attractive to the curious, and in demand. There was, indeed, much more interest shown in the latest copy of private verses than in the published poems of the professional writer,—however superior in merit. Literary men not unnaturally chafed at the popularity of their amateur rivals, for they suffered severely from the unacknowledged competition. "Men that should employ such as I am," Nash grumbles, "are enamoured of their own wits, and think whatever they do is excellent, though it be never so scurvie."² Drayton, few of whose poems sold well, complains when bringing out his "Polyolbion": "There is this great disadvantage against me, that it cometh out at this time when verses are wholly deduced to chambers, and nothing esteemed in this lunatic age but what is kept in cabinets and must pass by transcription."³ When passing in review the poets of the day, he expressly states that he will not recognise the writers of "private pieces" as worthy of notice.

[I] only myself to those few do tie
Whose works oft printed, set on every post,
To public censure subject have been most.
For such whose poems, be they ne'er so rare,
In private chambers that encloistered are,

1. Letter to E. of Devonshire, 1604. See Grosart. Daniel's "Works," Vol. i, p. xxiii.

2. "Piers Pennilesse." "Works," ii, 12.

3. Epistle "To the General Reader."

And by transcription daintily must goe,
 As though the world unworthy were to know
 Their rich composures
 let those pieces be
 Spoke of by those that shall come after me,
 I pass not for them . . .¹

Alexander complained concerning James I. "He prefers his own [poetic work] to all else." "A Prince becomes jealous," he says, "of possessors of those excellencies which he findeth in himself. . . ."²

Moreover, the amateur did in fact publish, while doing his best to discredit those who lived by publishing.³ In spite of his cherished superiority, the unprofessional writer loved fame, or notoriety, and there were many ways of contriving that the most carefully kept manuscript should appear in print. There were literary pirates always looking out for new manuscripts,—a little collusion would secure surreptitious publication, while the author could loudly lament the injury done to him. Anthologies abounded, moreover, and some of them—Davison's "Poetical Rhapsody," for instance—consisted entirely of poems by gentlemen amateurs. It was by no means unusual, further, for private writings to be published by friends after the author's death, as was the case with Sidney's "Arcadia." Works deemed of sufficient dignity or value were openly published by aristocratic writers; thus Sir John Harington, Sir Edward Fairfax, Sir Henry Constable, Sir William Alexander, Sir John Davies—all well-known in aristocratic circles—published their own work. Only the most aristocratic refrained from publishing unambitious lyrical poems.⁴

1. "Epistle to Henry Reynolds."

2. Letter to Drummond. See Masson, "Drummond of Hawthornden," pp. 119-20.

3. "Danter . . . You knowe there is many a one that paye me largely for the printing of theyr inventions." "Parnassus Plays" (1597-1601), ed. Macray (1886), p. 88.

4. The following did not publish, at least openly, during their lifetime: Dyer, Grevile, Raleigh, Sidney, the Earl of Oxford, Wotton.

Lyly considered that printers ought to think themselves greatly indebted to gentlemen, because they provided "so many fantasies to print."¹

Thus the professional author was doubly injured, his art sneered at by the very men who made a boast of loving poetry, and his livelihood imperilled by the competition of their published and unpublished writings.

Hence it is not surprising to find a hostile spirit shown by the writer towards the more fashionable part of the public. He felt, for his own part, the contempt of the expert and of the man of genius for the mere dilettante. Jonson, who was a master of the art of ridicule by innuendo, represents a fine gentleman verse-maker as justly indignant at being called a scholar. It is carefully explained that he is nothing of the kind; "He writes like a *gentleman*! Pox o' your scholar."² And again,

Daw: "Why, every man that writes in verse is not a poet; you have of the wits that write verses, and yet are no poets; they are poets that live by it, the poor fellows that live by it."

Dauph: "Why, would not you live by your verses, Sir John?"

Cler: "No, 'twere pity he should. A Knight live by his verses! He did not make them to that end, I hope. . . . He'll not hinder his own rising in the state so much. . . ." ³

This is indeed sheer mockery, but it is mockery of a widespread noxious prejudice.

Ridicule is the professional writer's weapon, and he used it with the expert's skill. Unfortunately, finding that his most popular writings were those which raised a malicious laugh, he was tempted to make epigram, satire, and unscrupulous libel his chief employment. Publishers who would not look at a new manuscript changed their tone if offered something spicily scan-

1. "Euphues." Arber's Reprint, p. 205.

2. Jonson. "Staple of News, iv, i.

3. Jonson. "Epicoene," II, ii.

dalous.¹ Hence the popularity of Nash, who raised "railing" to the level of a fine art; hence the immense sale of Dekker's racy, reckless pamphlet exposures of social vice. Hence, too, the frequency of admiring references to the epigrams of Jonson and Donne. Satire was, as in the later 17th century, the writer's one means of enforcing respect from the most contemptuous. But in this earlier period, satiric writing had not attained the artistic dignity which it gained in the hands of Dryden, nor could even the reckless genius of Nash avail to redeem from contempt his personal squabbles and his petulant attacks upon half-outworn literary fashions.

Throughout the period satire is apt to be either personal and malicious, or vaguely general and academic. Tempted by the comparative smallness of the society for which they wrote, knowing that every personal stroke would be recognised, writers wasted their strength in small fencing with individuals, avenging a personal insult, the neglect of a patron, the condescension of a lord, the superciliousness of a lacquey, with epigrams and satiric pamphlets. They even threatened beforehand. "If I be evil entreated," says Nash, "or sent away with a Flea in mine eare, let him looke that I will raile on him soundly, not for an houre or a day . . . but in some elaborate published Poem, which I will leave to the world . . . to be a living Image to all ages, of his beggarly parsimony and ignoble illiberalitie. . . . I have tearmes . . . laid in steepe in Aqua fortis, and gunpowder, that shall rattle through the skyes and make an Earthquake in a pesant's eares."² Even a churlish serving-man would be threatened with a lampoon. "Answer not a man of arte so churlishly again while thou livest. Why, man, I am able to make a pamphlet of thy blue coate, and the button in thy cap. . . ." Scholars were both hated and feared for their epigrams; "they are pestilent fellowes, they speake nothing but

1. "Parnassus Plays," ed. Macray, p. 89.

2. "Piers Pennilesse." "Works," ii, p. 64.

bodkins.”¹ Moreover they had at their command an instrument of vengeance even more potent than epigram or pamphlet, viz., the public stage. Even the very sheriff’s sergeants dreaded their dramatic gibes. “’Tis natural in us,” says one of them, “to hate scholars—natural, besides they will publishe our imperfections, knaveries, and conveyances upon scaffolds and stages.”² “Bables and comedies,” says Gabriel Harvey, sarcastically, “are parlous fellowes to decipher and discourage men. You . . . were best to please Pap-hatchet, for feare that he be moved . . . to make a Playe of you; and then is your credit quite undone for ever.”³ The satirist justified himself by professing to regard his writings as a kind of moral police-work, and possibly sometimes they were inspired by genuine moral indigation. At any rate Nash boasts of their efficacy; “Those that care neither for God nor the devill, by their quills,” he declares, “are kept in order.”⁴

In spite, however, of his dreaded skill in retaliation, the literary man suffered much from the hostile public, and perhaps not least from such as professed literary tastes. Fashion exacted from such persons a readiness to criticise; and criticism, often born of ignorant vanity, usually guided by no principles of art, and unrelated to any definite ideal, was inevitably capricious and perverse. The few genuine critics, such as Sidney, and the pedant Webbe, who had at least some criterion by which to guide, were lost in the multitude of ignorant chatterers who represented unorganised public opinion. Naturally, these men took the easiest road to gain a critic’s reputation, viz., capricious fault finding. On the stage, especially, the writer’s reputation was at the mercy of men who asserted their critical superiority by such elementary means as would nowadays be regarded simply as insufferably bad manners. “What did they (the spec-

1. “Returne from Parnassus,” ed. Macray, pp. 33, 119.

2. “The Puritan,” II, iv.

3. Harvey. “Pierces Supererogation,” “Works,” ed. Grosart, ii, 213.

4. “Piers Pennilesse.” “Works,” ii, p. 62.

tators) come for then?" says one of the characters in the New Inn. "To . . . possess the stage against the play : to dislike all, but mark nothing. And by their confidence of rising between the Acts, in oblique lines, make affidavit to the whole house, of their not understanding one scene."¹

Fitzdottrel, in "The Devil is an Ass," cannot bear to miss the play—but all he cares for is to sit through one act, in order to have earned the chance of rising and going away, "to vex the players, and to punish their poet, keep him in awe."²

Some poets were indeed kept in awe by such methods. Chapman's appeal to the fashionable audience to hear him through is positively plaintive.

"If," he urges, "our other audience see
You on the stage depart before we end
Our wits go with you all, and we are fools."³

According to the evidence of "The Guls Horn Book," however, such merely silent censure was not sufficient for many fashionable critics. This is the advice given to the full-fledged gallant. "It shall crowne you with rich commendation to laugh alowd in the midst of the most serious and saddest sceane of the terriblest Tragedy : and to let that clapper (your tongue) be tost so high that all the house may ring of it . . . For by talking and laughing . . . you heap Pelion upon Ossa, glory upon glory . . . Thirdly, you mightily . . . disgrace the author : mary you take up . . . a strong opinion of your owne judgment, and inforce the Poet to take pity of youre weaknesse, and by some dedicated sonnet, to bring you into a better paradise, onely to stop your mouth."⁴

1. Jonson. "New Inn." "To Reader."

2. Jonson. "The Devil is an Ass," III, i. Gifford (ed. 1816), Vol. v, p. 95.

3. "All Fools," pr. 1605. Prologue.

4. Dekker. "Works," ed. Grosart, Vol. ii, pp. 251-2.

Similar methods were employed to gain the reputation of a critic at the bookstalls. "You stand sometime at a stationer's stall, looking scurvily . . . on the face of a new Booke, be it never so worthy; and go (as ill-favouredly) mewing away.¹" Truly a public difficult to please, when the chief title to critical judgment was ability to look bored and to sneer! The learned and fastidious Jonson was driven at least once to express a preference for the unlearned reader.²

It must, of course, be conceded that some of the criticisms passed upon contemporary writings *were* based upon definite principles. There were indeed two chief standards of criticism in this age: one very commonly accepted by the general public—based upon a purely moral criterion; the other, the classical, based upon literary conceptions, and adopted only by the cultivated few. From those who adopted the former, the literary artist could hope but little; though well-meaning, it was narrowing, stultifying, ignorantly hostile. Of the latter writers rarely complain. Either they implicitly acknowledged it themselves, or they realised that those who criticised by reference to classical art were few, and upon the whole, though censorious, ineffective. It cannot be shown that these classical critics induced the general reader to accept their judgments in the least, and a discussion of their dicta is therefore not relevant here. In so far as they may have exerted any general influence, it lay in the direction of encouraging the conception of poetry as concerned with the imaginative and fictitious. By so doing they tended to add strength to the forces arrayed against literature upon grounds of moral prejudice.

Ethical criticism of poetry and drama was based largely upon the idea of its "falsity" and "frivolity"—for such were the terms into which the sternly moral

1. Dekker. "Seven Deadly Sins." "To Reader."

2. See p. 155.

Elizabethan translated "imaginativeness" and "artistic beauty." Poets, they regarded as "fantastical fools,"¹ if not worse. Bacon, it is true, asserted no moral inferiority in poetry when he described it as "submitting the shows of things to the desires of the mind,"² but such a "turning aside from the truth of things" was precisely what aroused censure in the mind of the average Puritan. For one thing, such purely fanciful work, they held, required no honest labour, no skill. "The enemies of Poetry," says Nash, ". . . tearme our best writers but babling Ballat-makers . . . Some dul-headed divines . . . deeme it no more cunning to write an exquisite Poem, then to preach pure Calvin, or distill the juice of a Commentary in a quarter sermon . . . You shall finde there goes more exquisite paines and puretie of wit, to the writing of one such rare poem as Rosamond, then to a hundred of your dunsticall sermons."³

Nor were falsity and frivolousness the worst of the charges brought against the literary art; the occasional maliciousness, and immorality of its votaries, were further stumbling-blocks. "Take heed of Poetry," was the saying, "for it hath commonly one of these three properties, belibelling the wicked, abusing the honest, or pleasing the foolish."⁴

Sober Englishmen regarded poetry as, if not actually immoral, at least harmful because wanting in seriousness, and alluring to vain delights. According to Spenser, Lord Burleigh was of those who considered it as vanity or worse. See the stanzas prefixed to the fourth book of the Faery Queene.

The rugged forehead, that with grave foresight
Welds Kingdomes causes and affaires of state,
My looser rimes (I wrote) doth sharply wite
For praising love as I have done of late,

1. Nash. "Piers Pennilesse." "Works, ii, 59-60.

2. "Advancement of Learning," Book ii, Section iv, (2).

3. Nash. *Ibid.*

4. Breton. "A Post with a Mad Packet of Letters," Part ii. "Works," ed. Grosart, ii, 36.

And magnifying lovers' deare debate;
By whiche fraile youth is oft to follie led,
Through false allurement of that pleasing baite,
That better were in vertues disciplined,
Than with vaine poemes weeds to have their fancies fed.

"To such," says the poet, "I do not sing at all," and he turns with dignity from those who are incapable of comprehending the sacred mysteries of poetry, to appeal to a more kindly audience.

Yet even Spenser had to bow to the hostile force of moral criticism. He acquiesced humbly in the judgment which condemned his beautiful and innocent poems on Love and Beauty,¹ writing in atonement, though rather perfunctorily, two other hymns on Heavenly Love and Heavenly Beauty.

In the case of drama, there were further causes of reprobation. The disorders attendant upon public representations were certainly real, for they are admitted even by the apologists. In *Kind-harts Dream* (1592), Chettle makes the ghost of Tarlton, the player, entreat playgoers to "use themselves after a more quiet order," reminding them that "it is far from manhood to make so public a place their field to fight in." Other less friendly writers make accusations more serious. The character of many plays also justly exposed authors and actors to the charge of grossness, and in later times, of immorality. Still, had this not been the case, it would have been impossible for playwrights to comply with the demands of the stern moralist. Nothing less would satisfy him than the subordination of all artistic purpose to the aim of conveying direct moral stimulus and instruction. Had the Elizabethan Puritan gained his point he would have stifled the drama, as, indeed, his children succeeded in doing. So he was disregarded, and the taste of the court and the mob became the playwright's mark, with the

1. Innocent, that is, if at first written in the form in which they have come down to us.

result that not only moral teaching, but moral feeling, also, almost disappeared from the dramatic world.

The lines in which Shakspeare expresses his bitter sense of the hostility of the respectable public, have already been referred to.¹ He confesses that he is "shamed" by that which he brings forth; that his name "receives a brand" from his profession. It can be easily demonstrated that this was no imaginary grievance. The puritan writer, Stubbes, shows, in spite of heroic efforts to be impartial, that the stern moralist was unable to regard the drama with any feeling but abhorrence. Stubbes admits, indeed, that "There is nothing so good but it may be abused," and declares himself not so precise that he would have the thing removed for the abuse. He wishes simply, he says, to have the abuse taken away. "Some kind of plays, . . ." he confesses, "contain matter . . . both of doctrine, erudition, good example, and wholesome instruction . . . so that when honest and chaste plays are used to these ends . . . then are they very tolerable exercises." But he soon forgets his admissions, and falls into wholesale condemnation. "If they be of divine matter, then are they most intolerable, or rather sacrilegious . . . If their plays be of profane matters, then tend they to the dishonour of God and nourishing of vice . . . I have heard some hold opinion . . . that a good example may be learned out of them . . . O blasphemy intolerable!"²

Gosson sums up the whole matter in one trenchant phrase. "Thus have I set down of the abuses of poets, pipers, and players, which bring us to pleasure, sloth, sleep, sin, and without repentance to death and the devil."³ Even the more genial Harrison becomes intolerant when it is a question of theatres. "Would to God," he cries, "these common plays were exiled . . . as

1. Sonnet 111.

2. "Anatomy of Abuses," 1583. New Shakespeare Soc., Preface, and pp. 88, 143-4.

3. "Schoole of Abuse" (1579). Shakespeare Soc., p. 32.

seminaries of impiety . . . and their theatres pulled down !”¹

More exalted personages shared these views, supporting their strictures by citations from the Fathers of the Church. Thus Bishop Babington complains: “These prophane and wanton stage plays or interludes, what an occasion they are of adultery and uncleanness . . . the world knoweth with too much hurt by long experience . . . These players behaviour polluteth all things. And of their plays he [Chrysostom] saith: they are the feasts of Satan, the inventions of the devill, &c. . . . Polluted bodies by these filthy occasions have on their death beds confesed the danger of them.”²

And Grindal, Bishop of London, writes to Cecil in 1562: “In my judgment ye should do very well to be a mean, that a proclamation was set forth to inhibit all plays for one whole year (if it were for ever it were not amiss), within the city or three miles compass.”³

Practical statesmen like Burleigh joined forces with moral fanatics like Stubbes in their suspicion of poetry; but with the latter this distrust was based upon hostility to all pleasure, regarded as tending to withdraw the mind from contemplation of things spiritual, and thus endangering the salvation of the soul. This attitude towards all the more humane instincts, as prompting towards undue indulgence of self or of others, cannot be better illustrated than by a passage from the life of Katherine Stubbes, the wife of the moralist. It is written by her husband, not long after her early death, to enshrine her memory as an example of piety to others. In quaint language he relates how earnestly she sought to deny herself all earthly pleasures, even caresses towards her favourite dog. As she lay on her death-bed, she espied lying at her feet “a little puppy or bitch (which

1. “Chronologie.” Quoted by Furnivall in Forewords to New Shakespeare Soc., ed. of “Description of England,” Part I, p. 7 iv.

2. “On the Ten Commandments.” Quoted in Forewords to New Shakespeare Soc., ed. of Stubbes’ “Anatomy of Abuses,” p. 83.*

3. See T. Wright. “Elizabeth and her Times,” Vol. i, p. 167.

in her lifetime she loved well).” She beat her away, “and calling her husband to her, said: ‘Good husband, you and I have offended God grievously in receiving this bitch many a time into our bed; the Lord give me grace to repent it and all other vanities.’”¹ Minds of such a temper were not likely to tolerate poetry or plays.² It was in vain that Sir John Harington, in the preface to his translation of *Orlando Furioso*, took pains to propitiate the reader who might have “this scruple, that it may be hurtful for his soul or conscience, to read a book of poetry.” It was a hopeless effort to gain over the goodwill of a body of men growing day by day more unfriendly.

Gosson rejoices in proofs of the spread of his way of thinking, applauding the “Gentlewomen, Citizens of London” for having schooled themselves, and of their own accord abhorred plays.³ Already, by 1615, the writer of the “Refutation of the Apology for Actors”⁴ is able to assert that one never sees now at a theatre “an ancient citizen, a chaste matron, a modest maid, a grave senator, a wise magistrate, a just judge, a godly preacher, a religious man not blinded in ignorance.” They have only for audience profane gallants, City dames, country clowns, and evil characters. “Magistrates, throughout almost every city in the land, by their authority, . . . do prohibit them [the players] from entering their precincts to exercise their craft.”

On the other side, Jonson bears unwilling witness to the power of the hostile faction

. Scandalised at toys,
As babies, hobby-horses, puppet-plays.⁵

1. “A Chrystal Glasse for Christian Women” (1591). Fol. B.

2. Thomas Wilcox says (9 Dec., 1576): “The cause of plague is sin, the cause of sin is plays, hence plays cause plague. All sin is taught in these schools of vice.” Quoted by H. S. Symmes. “Début de la critique dramatique en Angleterre” (1903), p. 71.

3. In a letter “To the Gentlewomen, Citizens of London . . .,” at end of the “Schoole of Abuse” (1579).

4. By J. G. (1615), p. 58.

5. “Bartholomew Fair.” “Prologue to his Majesty.”

and deploras the success of the "sourer sort" in putting down innocent pastimes.¹

The strict Puritan, with his ideal of a life spent in devotion to religious duties and contemplation, could not but abhor all pleasurable diversions. Everything beautiful was, to the more austere and narrow-minded type of zealot, *ipso facto* evil. The human body itself was to be sacrificed willingly to the needs of the soul, and that this might the more readily be accomplished men were bidden to loathe and revile it. They were to meditate in their chambers on this wise: "O what a filthy, unclean, and ugglesome carcase do I bear about with me, that for very shame had need to be covered with garments!"² The writer knew perfectly well that many Englishmen had learnt from Renaissance Italy to regard this same human body as a miracle of beauty, worthy of all reverence!

The kind of life inculcated, and followed out, as far as possible, by the sincere Puritan, is to be found exemplified in the pages of the diary kept by Lady Margaret Hoby.³ She devoted herself to private prayer regularly four times a day: she examined herself nightly as to her conduct during the day; she read and annotated her bible constantly. Every sermon attended she made a practice of writing out by heart; and all this in addition to the family bible reading and worship conducted by the chaplain! As she had also to superintend the household, working with her own hands, to look after the ploughing and sowing on the estate, and to act as general nurse; it may be believed that there was little time to spare; yet such leisure moments as could be found were religiously devoted to reading or listening to "a sermon book," "Cartwright's book": "a good man's book who proveth against M. Bilson that Christ suffered

1. "The Sad Shepherd," Act i, Sc. ii.

2. Philip Stubbes. "The Perfect Pathway." New Shakespeare Soc., 1877-9, p. 219.

3. Niece by marriage to Burleigh.

in soul the wrath of God.”¹ Had England been peopled entirely with Puritans the outlook for the poor professional writer who happened not to be a divine would have been poor indeed.

But the moralists had to fight hard to make their views prevail. Many are the complaints they raised as to the attempts of the pleasure-loving populace to retain or regain their old diversions. The Corporation of Kendal, wishing to put down the old Corpus Christi play, met with great opposition from “many of the common inhabitants of the borough,” whom they accused of “preferring their own private commodities and the customs of usage to the benefits and common wealth of all others.”² The folk of Coventry grudged sorely the loss of their old Hock Tuesday play, “of late laid down, they knew no cause why, unless it were by the zeal of certain their preachers, men very commendable for their behaviour and learning . . . but somewhat too sour in preaching away their pastimes.”³

Nor was it only the uneducated who clung to the old dramatic sports. For instance, the schoolmaster of the Grammar School of Wells fell into disgrace with the authorities for having taken his boys to Axbridge “to playe in the parish church theare;”⁴ and there are records of the punishment of more than one cleric for taking part in forbidden diversions. Thus William Gale was reprimanded because he “did openlie in disguised order . . . goe in a maske with a visarde on his face into the parish of Pilton . . . to the evil example of others.”⁵

The rising tide of asceticism could not, however, be

1. Diary of Lady Margaret Hoby (1599 . . .). Egerton MSS. 2614 F. [Brit. Museum.]

2. Hist. MSS. Comm. x, App. iv, p. 314. MSS. of Corporation of Kendal. [22 Sept. 1586.]

3. “Laneham’s Letter” (1571). Ballad Soc., pp. 27–8.

4. Hist. MSS. Comm. x, App. iii, p. 243. MSS. of Wells Cathedral. [20 Feb., 1582.]

5. Hist. MSS. Comm., x, App. iii, p. 244. MSS. of Wells Cathedral. [20 Feb., 1582.]

stemmed; even the royal authority could only injure its own prestige by the attempt. James I, in his character of liberal-minded patron of the arts and innocent sports, endeavoured to secure some sort of toleration by the exercise of his individual authority. In 1617, upon an appeal made to him, he issued a Declaration of Sports, according to the public the right of enjoying their old amusements, now everywhere proscribed by the local authorities. But when he tried, early in 1618, to get the Declaration read from the pulpits, a most determined opposition forced him to give way. Arthur Wilson, in his *Life and Reign of James I*, voices the horror with which men greeted the "frightful apparition" of this "dancing book."¹ Not only was James's general order a failure; even in individual instances royal authority was openly defied. On July 5th, 1630, "the puppet-players craved leave to play here in this town [?Dorchester], and had a warrant under the king's hand, and yet were refused!"² The triumph of the moralists was shortly complete, and they swept away for the time, not only immoral sports and plays, but art in all its forms.

Meanwhile, what were the men of letters doing? They tried all means of defence, but it was difficult to gain a hearing. The authorities were on the side of the aggressors, and when, for instance, Thomas Lodge wrote a "Defence of Music, Poetry, and Stage Plays," it was refused a license, on the ground of its subject, though an answer to it, based by Stephen Gosson upon a "private and imperfect copy," was readily allowed publication.³

The simplest method of defence was that adopted by George Whetstone, in the preface to "*Promus and Cassandra*;" he attributed the discrediting of drama to

1. This was the name given by "the sounder sort" to the King's Declaration of Sports.

2. Egerton MSS. 784. [Brit. Museum.]

3. Lodge. "*Alarum for Usurers*" (1584). Preface

the "tryfels of yong unadvised and rash witted youngsters."¹ But this was but giving the case away. A stronger line of defence was the endeavour to meet the moralists upon their own ground, and prove the ethical usefulness of poetry and plays. The moral assailants held literature to be tolerable only when enforcing definite ethical truths. And this criterion was accepted, unfortunately, not only by the average puritanical, uncultivated citizen, but by the learned and the more artistic also. One and all agreed that literature must inspire (most of them said teach) morality. After all, they had good warrant for their view; the classical scholar knew that Horace was with him.

The apologist, then, accepted with as good grace as possible the position thrust upon him, and set to work to demonstrate the ethical teaching of poetry and plays. It must be confessed that he sometimes asserted more than he could well prove, and that he can have convinced few but those desirous of conviction. Thus William Webbe, pointing out that "goode lessons . . . pithie and wise sentences" might be gathered from the least serious writings by those minded to observe them, went so far as to declare that in English poetry he knew of no such "perilous pieces" as were to be found in the Latin poets.² It must be surmised that the worthy tutor was but scantily read in the English poets. Gosson was ready with the obvious retort to the earlier assertion. In quaintly Euphuistic language he argued: "The calmest seas hide dangerous rocks, the Wolfe iettes in Weather's felles: manye good sentences are . . . written by Poets, as ornamentes to beautifye their workes, and sette theyr trumperie too sale without suspect . . . Pul off the visard that Poets maske in, you shall disclose their reproch."³

1. See H. L. Symmes. "Débuts de la critique dramatique en Angleterre" (1903), p. 76-7.

2. "A Discourse of English Poetrie" (1586), pp. 43-45. Arber's Reprint.

3. "Schoole of Abuse" (1579). Arber's Reprint, p. 20.

Heywood, abandoning reliance upon scattered moral "sentences," asserted morality to be the general *aim* of many plays. They reprove vice, he said, by showing its loathsome deformity.¹ Nash went further, boldly declaring that plays were "a rare exercise of virtue." They reprove evil, he says, under cover of delighting; they do not corrupt; they warn.²

A most valiant defender is Massinger, whose play, "The Roman Actor," is entirely devoted to the vindication and eulogy of the stage. In a speech made before the assembled Roman senate, the actor Paris thus eloquently pleads his cause:

. If to enflame
The noble youth with an ambitious heat
To endure the frosts of danger, nay, of death.
To be thought worthy the triumphal wreath
By glorious undertakings, may deserve
Reward or favour from the commonwealth;
Actors may put in for as large a share
As all the sects of the philosophers.³

Sidney had taken the same standpoint, in his "Apologie for Poetrie." Laying aside for a time his conviction of the value of imaginative art simply for its pleasure-giving power, and accepting the position laid down by the moralist, he asserted the positive ethical value of poetry to be greater than that of either Philosophy or History. He was too wise to profess moral teaching to be the aim of literary art, but he showed that in effect, appealing to the emotions by the presentation of noble example, it provided the strongest possible stimulus to virtue.

Men of narrower range tried to prove the definite teaching function of literature, and for this purpose, they found, as mediæval scholars had found before

1. "Apology for Actors" (1612). Somer's Tracts, Series ii, Vol. i, pp. 197-8.

2. "Piers Pennilesse." "Works," ii, pp. 88-91.

3. Act i, Sc. iii. (Licensed 1626, Printed 1629).

them, the great usefulness of the plan of "allegorical interpretation."

Sir John Harington painfully evolved a moral allegory from almost every canto of "*Orlando Furioso*." For instance: "In the beginning of this booke [book xv] was an excellent morall (if you observed it) showing how hurtfull it is for a captaine to be prodigall of his men, and rash or headlong in his attempts." Again: "For the allegorie in this Canto [Canto i] I find not much to be said . . . yet an allegory may not unfitly be gathered of Bayardo's following Angelica, which may thus be taken. Bayardo, a strong horse, without rider or governor, is likened to the desire of man, that runs furiously after pleasure or honour, or whatever man doth most curiously affect." Harington is careful not to interfere with latitude of interpretation! Moreover, wherever a general reflection of a moral character occurs, the translator calls attention to it by the word "sentence" printed in the margin. There was really no excuse for the reader if he failed to gather for himself moral teaching out of this work!

Writers took pains to propitiate opinion, and advertised their wares on the title-pages as "profitable."¹ Dekker announced that he described villainy "only to have others shun it." Others made more definite and real concessions to the public demand for moral worth; even Jonson confessed that he gave an ending not happy to "*Volpone*" in order to "put a snaffle in their mouths that cry out 'We never punish vice in our interludes.'"²

Greene made the most wholesale attempts to conciliate public opinion. Several of his pamphlets, evidently intended as bids for the favour of the sober citizen, were devoted entirely to the discussion of moral aphorisms, enlivened by a few illustrative stories.³

1. Dekker. "*Belman of London*" (1608).

2. Dedication to "*Volpone*" (acted 1605).

3. See "*The Royal Exchange*," and "*Farewell to Follie*." His "*Mourning Garment*," and "*Never Too Late*," are definitely moral in tone.

It must, however, be confessed that in many cases the professions of moral intention were extremely perfunctory. Nash, who made no concessions to the puritan, abuses other writers for their hollow pretences. "Are they not ashamed," he asks, "in their prefixed posies to adorn a pretence of profit mixed with pleasure, whereas . . . there is scarce to be found one precept pertaining to virtue?"¹ (It is to be observed that he also seems to be of those who confine their notions of ethical value to that which directly teaches.)

Not much more successful were the efforts made by some apologists to defend their art by distinguishing between the use and abuse of poetry. Most thinking men tried to make the distinction, Gosson and Stubbes among the number; but in application, like most other attempts at moderation in times of strong passion, it broke down entirely, and Nash was left lamenting the suicidal futility of "extending invectives so far against the abuse that almost the thing remains not whereof they admitte anie lawfull use."²

Another line of defence was the endeavour to bring discredit upon the opposition by suggesting that it was based upon motives of self-interest. Thus, for example, the defenders of the drama urged that its real opponents were not honest respectable citizens, but vintners, alewives, proprietors and frequenters of dicing-houses, bowling-alleys, and the like. They argued that plays ought to be regarded by sober-minded folk with favour, as providing a fairly harmless entertainment for those who would otherwise seek amusement in evil haunts.³ But this argument was generally felt to have even less force than the preceding. The apologists were uncomfortably conscious that the bulk of the opposition did in fact arise from a pious asceticism, entirely unmixed with interested motives.

1. "Anatomy of Absurditie." "Works," i, 13.

2. "Anatomy of Absurditie." "Works," i, pp. 27-8.

3. Chettle. "Kind Hart's Dreame." Nash. "Piers Pennilesse." "Works," ii, 88.

One weapon, however, found the puritan party more vulnerable. It was difficult for them to clear themselves as a class from the charge of hypocrisy and insincerity; they are charges at all times difficult to disprove. And the defenders of the literary profession made the most of the popular prejudice against excessive scrupulousness. They drew pictures of unctuous hypocrites seeking a reputation for godliness by the use of cant phraseology, and by captious prohibition of innocent pastimes, while themselves indulging in sins of avarice, malice, and all unrighteousness. They are

. . Such whose faces are all zeal
 that will not smell of sin,
 But seem as they were made of sanctity!
 Religion in their garments, and their hair
 Cut shorter than their eyebrows.¹

They have no sincerity; their lives are ruled by words, not ideas; they may not swear, but they may lie, will not steal but will "nym."² They have a convenient cloak for all manner of vices. "A sermon's a fine short cloak of an hour long, and will hide the upper part of a dissembler." Dekker sketches in clear colours the "sober Perpetuana suited Puritan," with his open affectation of righteousness, and his secret indulgence in loathsome vice.³

Most striking, among representations of the kind, are those by Spenser, Jonson, and Shakespeare. Spenser contents himself with bewailing, in the spirit of the lover of beauty, the ravages committed by sacrilegious intolerance, typified by the Blatant Beast, in churches and monasteries.⁴ Jonson has drawn, in *The Alchemist*, convincingly cruel pictures of the baser natures among the Puritan party,—Ananias, the ignorant, prating,

1. Jonson. "Every Man Out of His Humour." Prologue.

2. "The Puritan," ii, Sc. i.

3. "Seven Deadly Sins" (ed. 1606). "Works," ii, p. 44.

4. "Faery Queene," Book vi, Canti xii, Stanzas 24-5.

fanatical zealot; and the more despicable Tribulation,—plausible, cunning, and unscrupulously devoted to his own avaricious ends. Shakespeare's attitude is marked by none of Jonson's relentless bitterness. He ridicules in Malvolio some of the minor foibles specially characteristic of the Puritans; and in Angelo, in "Measure for Measure," he shows the pitfalls that beset the self-righteous man, implacably bent on ignoring or uprooting human frailty. But in each case he refrains from narrowing the scope of the satire to an attack against Puritans as a class. Their faults and vices, as he represents them, are only an exaggeration of those common to all men. Shakespeare is no mere special pleader, holding a brief for the artist's liberty as against the moralist censor; he urges the cause of freedom, sincerity and sympathy for all humanity.

Writers of less seriousness than Jonson and Shakespeare content themselves with simply pouring ridicule upon their opponents. Chapman suggests in one of his masques that the Puritan is fitly represented with a pair of bellows on his head, to typify his inflated self-opinionatedness.¹ Middleton makes fun of the Puritan fustian-weaver, who swears that he will swoon if forced to sit through the performance of a play.² Not very effective as argument, this; but it served its purpose of turning the laugh against the enemy.

The artist conscious of the real dignity of his art did not scruple, at times, to turn the tables and hold up to derision one of the chief weaknesses of his antagonist, viz., ignorant incapacity to comprehend literary beauty. He had no hesitation in accusing his enemies of crass dullness, of absorption in material pursuits, of incapacity for admiring beauty or greatness in any form. Show such men in a historical play, said Nash, a magnificent image of the greatness of their fatherland; "I, but (will

1. Masque of the Middle Temple and Lincoln's Inn (1613).

2. "The Mayor of Quinborough," Act v, Sc. i. "Works," Dyce's ed., Vol. i, p. 206.

they say) what doe we get by it?"¹ That drastic satire, "The Pilgrimage to Parnassus," represents Stupido counselling the would-be scholars, out of the depths of his wisdom, to "follow no longer these profane artes that are the raggs and parings of learning." "Sell all these books," he urges, "and by a good Martin and twoo or three hundreth of Jeneva printe, and I warrant you will have learninge enoughe."² "Soul blinded sots," Drayton angrily calls such folk,

. that creepe
In dirt, and never saw the wonders of the deepe.³

Two great writers only, dealing directly with the main theme of the justification of poetry, go to the root of the matter, and dare to assert that art is its own justification, viz., Sidney and Daniel. Not that Sidney asserts this in so many words; but the trend of his treatment implies the belief,—however imperfectly formulated even in the writer's own mind,—that to arouse pure emotion by artistic means is a legitimate end in itself. The famous passage in which he enthusiastically extols poetry, as above and beyond Nature, is based upon this conception.

"Nature never set forth the earth in so rich tapistry, as divers Poets have done, neither with plesant rivers, fruitful trees, sweet smelling flowers: nor whatsoever els may make the too much loved earth more lovely. Her world is brazen, the Poets only deliver a golden. . . . With the force of a divine breath he [man] bringeth forth things far surpassing her doings. . . . But these argumentes wil by fewe be understood, and by fewer granted."⁴

Neither Sidney nor Daniel wasted words in idle recrimination against opponents. They made no accusation of stupidity, ignorance, hypocrisy, and the like;

1. Nash. "Piers Pennilesse." "Works," ii, p. 89.

2. "Parnassus Plays," ed. Macray, p. 12.

3. "Polybion," Song vi, ll. 301. . . .

4. "Apologie for Poetrie" (written in 1581). Arber's Reprint, pp. 25-6.

Daniel simply asserted with dignity, as if unquestioned, the supreme worth of poetry; showing in eloquent, cogent, and thoughtful words the great need for learning and literary art in a nation, and the evils which must ensue upon contempt for them. He is jealous for the honour of England, in face of the nations of Europe, and pleads that she may be allowed, as she well can, to take her place worthily among them.

Should we this ornament of glory then,
 As th' unmaterial fruits of shades, neglect?
 Or should we, careless, come behind the rest
 In powers of words, that go before in worth.
 Whenas our accents equall to the best,
 Is able greater wonders to bring forth.
 When all that ever hotter spirits exprest
 Comes bettered by the patience of the North.
 And who, in time, knows whither we may vent
 The treasure of our tongue, to what strange shores
 This gain of our best glory shall be sent,
 To enrich unknowing Nations with our stores?

For himself he cares nothing. His art brings its own reward. Though his audience be few, "that few is all the world." One understanding reader is to him "a Theatre large enow." No matter if men

"Neglect, distaste, uncomprehend, disdain."

No public neglect can undo, says he,

The love I bear unto this holy skill.
 This is the thing that I was borne to doo
 This is my scene, this part must I fulfil.¹

On the other hand, discouraging as were the effects of ignorance, bad taste, and narrow hostility, it must be recognised that there was much in the public life of the times to stimulate literary production. It is not proposed to enter fully into a discussion of the characteristics of public life in this epoch; certain facts may, however, be noticed as tending to explain how it was that so much

1. "Musophilus" (1599), ll. 951-60, 556-79.

of the energy of the time manifested itself in literary productivity.

The Englishman of the later sixteenth century possessed in abundance a taste which finds its gratification most easily in imaginative literature, viz., a love of the strange and marvellous. That paralysing incapacity for realising the unfamiliar which nowadays besets many more highly trained minds, did not fetter him. And this was so partly because he lived in an age of expansion and discovery, partly because he had for some time fed his imagination upon newly-revived mediæval romances. These were the favourite reading of all but the highest class, and that class shared the taste, though they preferred to gratify it with the romances of Spain and France. Innumerable references to *Sir Dagonet*, *The Twelve Peers of France*, *Sir Lancelot*, *The Round Table*, *The Four Sons of Aymon*, *Bevis of Hampton*, *Guy of Warwick*, *William of Cloudesley*, *Sir Gawayn*, and other legendary heroes, prove that Elizabethan writers could rely with certainty upon a widespread familiarity with these old stories;¹ doubtless they owed to Caxton, and other early printers, for their revival of mediæval romance, a debt greater than they knew. Such records as we possess of the libraries of the middle and lower classes reveal a great preponderance of books of this class. The country gentry also still delighted in them. In the well-known "Dialogue between the English Courtier and the Country Gentleman" (1579) the latter thus vaunts the pleasures of rural society: "We want not also pleasant mad-headed knaves that be properly learned, and will read in divers pleasant books and good authors, such as *Sir Guy of Warwick*, *The Four Sons of Aymon*, *The Ship of Fools*, *The Budget of Demands*, *The Hundred Merry Tales*, *The Book of Riddles*, and many other excellent writers,

1. Dekker's pamphlets abound in such references. See also the list of Captain Cox's books, in Laneham's Letter. Ballad Soc. (1871), pp. xiv, and 29-30. See later in the present chapter.

—both witty and pleasant.”¹ Readers who esteemed themselves too genteel for old-fashioned English romance read *Amadis of Gaul*, *Palmerin d’Oliva*, and other foreign tales.²

Later on, when taste was changing, and the familiar and realistic coming into vogue, Samuel Rowlands described in somewhat unsympathetic vein the supposed effects of over-much reading of romance, in the character of “*The Melancholy Knight*” (1615). The Knight had read *Sir Lancelot*, *The Knight of the Sun*, *Sir Triamour*, *Sir Bevis*, *Sir Guy*, *The Four Sons of Aymon*, and “all the old world’s worthy men at armes,”—with the result that he dreamt perpetually of woods, wildernesses, groves, and castles, and was almost ready to combat the *Terrible Dragon at Horsham*.³ There was thus great encouragement for the production of new works of invention and imagination; readers, if not highly cultivated, were at any rate not limited in mental range.

Tastes of this kind among readers, of course, proved a snare to the mediocre writer unfurnished with material from real life. He was tempted to rely upon the easy invention of marvels. Joseph Hall, with the contempt of the satirist, scoffs at the unlucky tragic poet, grounded for lack of matter, and driven to make up

His hard betaken tale

With strange enchantments, fetcht from darksome vale.⁴

Hence the preference long displayed in drama—until Ben Jonson and Beaumont and Fletcher dethroned it to make way for the study of contemporary social types—for the romantic. The imaginative public loved to admire the adventures of *Perdita*, or a *Rosalind*, and

1. See *Roxburghe Library* edition, p. 57.

2. Antony Munday catered for this class. He published between 1588 and 1619 translations of more than seven popular romances, including *Amadis de Gaule*, *Palmerin d’Oliva*, and *Palmerin of England*—which ran through five editions.

3. A translation of “*Don Quixote*” had been licensed for publication in Jan., 1611–12.

4. “*Virgidemiarum vi Libri*,” Book i, *Satire iv* (1597–8).

to gape at the magic exploits of a Faustus or a Friar Bacon. The writer of "The Four Prentises," carrying his scene to Jerusalem, appealed with confidence to his audience: "Had ye not rather, for noveltie's sake, see Jerusalem ye never saw, than London that ye see hourly?"¹ And Jonson thus scoffingly describes the taste of "the people." "If a child could be born in a play, and grow up to a man, in the first scene, before he went off the stage; and then after to come forth a squire, and be made a knight; and that knight to travel between the acts, and do wonders in the Holy Land or elsewhere; kill Paynims, wild boars, dun cows, and other monsters; beget him a reputation and marry an emperor's daughter for his mistress; convert his father's country, and at last come home, and all-to-be laden with miracles. . . . These miracles would please, I assure you . . . for there be of the people that will expect miracles."² In the same way Nash waged war against the romantic prose story, scoffing at "the fantastical dreames of those exiled Abbey-lubbers, from whose idle pens proceeded those worne-out impressions of the feyned no-where acts of Arthur of the Round Table, Arthur of litle Britaine, Sir Tristrame, Hewon of Burdeaux, the Squire of Lowe Degre, the foure sons of Aymon, with infinite others."³

Readers will be reminded of that excellent witty satire upon the taste of the middle classes, Fletcher's "Knight of the Burning Pestle" (c. 1611) where the grocer's wife in the audience insists on their prentice being allowed to play a part on the stage, and as a result a very ordinary drama of citizen life is shot through and through with wild impossible scenes of adventure. The public fancy was fed not only by reading, but also by the marvellous reports of travellers and discoverers;

1. Prologue (ed. 1615).

2. "Magnetic Lady." "Works," ed. Gifford (1816), I, i, end.

3. Nash. "The Anatomie of Absurditie" (1589). "Works," ed. Grosart, Vol. i, p. 14.

many of which were, moreover, put into print. Stories of the fabulous treasures and uncanny creatures to be found in unexplored American forests were everywhere rife. Spenser humorously appealed for belief in his faery land, on the strength of other recent marvellous discoveries.¹ Caliban was suggested by such a reported strange being, half-human, half-beast.

There is, however, a dark side to this indulgence in the fantastic and imaginative. Among the ignorant, imagination readily turns to credulity and superstition; the Elizabethan was haunted by superstitious fears of devils, spirits, ghosts, witchcraft, and evil omens. Gentle and simple alike believed implicitly in possession by the devil. When Dr. John Dee's maid-servant was afflicted with melancholia, he recorded in his private diary her sad "temptation" and "possession" "by a wicked spirit"; and related how, in spite of prayer and anointing with holy oil, the evil one at length prevailed upon her to destroy herself.² The death of the Earl of Derby, in 1594, was generally believed to have been brought about by witchcraft.³ Many strange stories of devils, ghosts, haunting spirits and wizardry are related, with full credence, by Heywood in his "Hierarchie of Angels," and the whole subject of the miraculous powers of witches, their leagues with the evil one, and their malicious practices, was dealt with at length by no less a person than King James I. in his "Demonologie."⁴ Such was the public terror that the notorious wizard, Dr. Lambe, was beaten to death in London streets by the boys and apprentices (1628).⁵ Even so enlightened and humane a thinker as Sir Thomas Browne declared, and

1. "Faery Queene." Proem to Book iv.

2. Diary of D. John Dee. Camd. Soc., Old Series, Vol 19 [Aug., 1590—Dec., 1591].

3. J. Lodge. *Illustr. Brit. Hist.*, iii, 47-9. See further a graphic account of the exorcism of devils, in 1585-6, in "Essays and Reviews," by T. G. Law (1904).

4. Reginald Scot published in 1584 "The Discovery of Witchcraft," a most exhaustive discussion of witchcraft, and all the beliefs relating thereto.

5. See Egerton MSS. 784 [Brit. Museum].

unhappily acted upon, his conviction "that there are witches," and that "the Devill doth really possess some men."¹

Hence an inexhaustible fund of material for imaginative and emotional treatment lay ready to hand for the writer,—material offering opportunities for stirring and immediate effect such as can be obtained from few other subjects. Authors availed themselves largely of it. They differ in their representation of the supernatural,—from Shakespeare, whose ghosts are solemn and awe-inspiring, visionary beings, and whose witches are unearthly incarnations of evil; to Chapman, whose *Umbra Friar*² is a mere piece of stage "business," and Dekker, whose "*Witch of Edmonton*" is a poor, commonplace, down-trodden old woman, tempted, incongruously enough, by a vulgar demon in the shape of a black dog. One and all, employing the supernatural whether for purposes of tragedy or of comedy, or as mere "machinery," rely upon a belief in its perfect credibility. Broadly, crudely comic, are some of the representations,—as, for example, when the devil strikes consternation into the heart of the naughty Friar by carrying on to the scene, on his back, the said Friar's crony, the hostess, with her shoulder of mutton and spit.³ But to the contemporary Elizabethan, the situation, however superficially comic, was enhanced by a thrilling belief in its possibility. The scene in which Faustus is dragged off to hell by demons must, in spite of the "squibs and fireworks" of the stage performance,⁴ have struck terror to the hearts of the audience.

The same awesome attraction surrounded narratives of the doings of alchemists and astrologers. But in their

1. "Religio Medici." See "Temple Classics" ed., pp. 20, 21. See also D. N. B.

2. In "Bussy d'Ambois."

3. In Greene's "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay" (pr. 1594). See Works of Greene and Peele, ed. Dyce, p. 156.

4. "Like Squibs when Dr. Faustus goes to the Devil." Dekker, "Work for Armourers" (1609). Works, ed. Grosart, iv, p. 155.

case writers preferred to make capital out of them by jesting rather than by serious treatment. Doubtless the difference lies in the fact that writers themselves shared the general terror of the supernatural, but were incredulous as to astrology and alchemy. All the same, much picturesque material was thereby provided for them, and much excellent matter for jesting and satire. Over the common people, and probably over the greater part of the middle class, the astrologer still wielded unbounded sway. He regulated, by means of almanacs and horoscopes, the minutest details of their lives, prescribing, to adopt Nash's jesting description, "unfallible rules," as to the days when it is "good to clyp and shave haire, and to clyp sheepe," when it is "good to fyshe in rivers, and to bathe in baths."

Prognosticating almanacs¹ were for the bookseller and author "readier money than ale or cakes."² The lover in the "Magnetic Lady" is represented as making love according to "notes and prognostics."³ Dekker and Nash both wrote witty "Prognostications" for the year, after the manner of Rabelais, prescribing the "best time to breed love locks in . . . as also under what planet a man may with least danger pick his teeth."⁴ The witty exposure of the impostures and frauds of alchemists by Jonson in 1610 probably did little more to convince the public mind than Chaucer's sarcasm had done two centuries earlier.⁵ Philip Stubbes, with his usual sobriety, discusses astrology seriously. He refuses to believe that a man's fortune can be told by the stars, but confesses that he holds that they "have effects and operations," and that "it pleaseth the majesty of God to work by them as by his instruments." Finally he adds, "I neither condemn astronomy nor astrology, nor

1. See amongst others an Almanac for 1579, by Alexander Mounslowe [Bodl. Library].

2. "Have with you to Saffron Walden." Epistle ded. Works, ed. Grosart, iii, p. 105.

3. Act iv, Sc. i.

4. Nash, *ut supra*. Epistle ded, p. 11.

5. To judge from the career of the notorious William Lilly, during the mid. 17th century, astrology even gained renewed credence.

yet the makers of prognostications or almanacs for the year. But I condemn the abuse in them."¹

But however little most writers shared in these public errors, the less scrupulous were willing enough to make their profit out of them. "That greedy sea-gull ignorance is apt to devour anything,"² says Nash; and the "yellow press" of the day supplied their readers abundantly with such narratives as that of "The Witches bidding the Devel to dinner at Derby,"³ or "The Strange and Wonderful Judgment of God upon a False Swearer."⁴ "They talke of an Oxe that toled the bell at Woolwitch, and howe from an Oxe, hee transformed himself to an olde man, and from an old man to an infant, and from an infant to a young man. Strange propheticall reports . . . they mutter he gave out, when in truth they are nought els but cleanly coyned lyes."⁵ The standard "prodigy" was the famous "serpent of Sussex," described at length in a pamphlet of 1614, signed by three eye-witnesses. It lurked in a forest near Horsham, was a dragon nine feet long, casting venom to the distance of four rods, and had already slain a man, a woman, and four mastiffs.⁶

It is a far cry from the Dragon of Horsham to Caliban and the Witches of Macbeth, but the public feeling which was appealed to by the one was ready to welcome the other. To judge from the sale of Zadkiel's Almanac and Old Moore's Almanac, there exists still to-day a reading public as credulous as ever; to judge from the columns of the "yellow press" it is just as greedy of

1. "Anatomy of Abuses" (1583). New Shaks. Soc., Part ii, 66.

2. "Lenten Stuffe." Works, v, 288.

3. Jonson. "News from the New World." Works, ed. Gifford (1816), Vol. vii, p. 352.

4. Stubbes tells of a blasphemer who became rooted to the spot so that he could not be dragged thence by horses. The man still remains, he says, rooted in the same place. [Stubbes writes in 1583; the event, he says, took place on July 4th, 1580. Fortunately the blasphemer was a German.] "Anatomy of Abuses," p. 114.

5. Nash. "Christ's Tears." Works, ed. Grosart, Vol. iv, p. 260.

6. See Harleian Miscellany, Series I., Vol. iii.

sensation; but the average writer for a class of somewhat higher cultivation, which prides itself perhaps unduly upon freedom from superstition and sensationalism, misses somewhat of the stimulus supplied by a circle of imaginative readers.

[Love of the beautiful, a source of intense stimulus to every literary artist, seems to have been the birthright of all Elizabethans. Some indulged it to the utmost; others, fearful of its temptations, sternly endeavoured to repress it; very few were without it. Not that they understood how to distinguish the purer, chaster forms of loveliness from the merely gaudy and pretentious; they were easily misled; but in literature, in architecture, in dress, in pageants, they sought eagerly for beauty, trusting only too often to find it in elaborate decorativeness. Richness, luxuriance, elaboration, were the qualities which specially appealed to them, and writers endeavoured to please both their readers and themselves by inventing new artificial forms of diction, of verse rhythm, and of ingenious adornment. At one time the elaborately beautiful mechanism of the sonnet attracted public taste; at another the demand was all for new lyrical stanzas. At one time the Euphuistic fashion of similes and alliterative decoration was in vogue; at another the Arcadian metaphorical style held the field.

"Now nothing," says Jonson, "is good that is natural; right and natural language seems to have the least of the wit in it; that which is writhed and tortured is counted the more exquisite. Cloth of bodkin or tissue must be embroidered; as if no face were fair that were not powdered or painted; no beauty to be had but in wresting and writhing our own tongue! Nothing is fashionable till it be deformed; and this is to write like a gentleman. All must be affected and preposterous."¹ Daniel sighs for an age of greater simplicity, free from "wanton and superfluous bravery."²

1. "Discoveries." *De Vere Argutis*. Works, ed. Gifford (1816), Vol. ix, pp. 172-3.

2. "A Panegyrike Congratulatory" (1603).

For the delectation of the fashionably educated, classical allusions decorated every page. "Take any of our play-books without a Cupid or a Mercury in it, and burn it for a heretic in poetry."¹ For the lower class of readers, puns and witty coarse jests, ingenious playing with words, supplied the place of the classical allusions.

Paramount as was the desire for beauty, the superficiality of Elizabethan refinement is well-known, and is sufficiently obvious in the writings of the time. Just as an interest in poetry was compatible with a strange inability to discern good from bad, so, in manners, much effort to attain elaborate elegance co-existed with a lack of dignity, of consideration, even of decency, that now strikes one as mere barbarism. Queen Elizabeth, it is well known, boxed the ears of the Earl of Essex in the Council Chamber. She punished "both with bloes and yevill wordes" a gentlewoman who had offended her.² She rebuffed a suitor with a complaint of his stinking boots; and he retorted, "Tut, tut, madame, it is my suit that stinks."³ To take an example from another rank of society, Philip Stubbes mentions it as one among the many noteworthy virtues of his dead wife that "there was never one filthy, uncleane, undecent, or unseemly word heard to come forth of her mouth, nor ever once to curse or ban, to sweare or blaspheme God."⁴

One can feel no surprise, therefore, at the coarseness of the language in many scenes purporting to represent conversations of high life; Shakespeare's Beatrice was doubtless no more outspoken than Elizabeth's own gentlewomen. Peele's Queen Elinor, who gives a cuff on the ears to King Edward I.,⁵ Marston's Rossaline, who offers to spit at her lover as a favour to him,⁶ were

1. Jonson. "Cynthia's Revels." Induction.

2. Rutland Papers. Hist. MSS. Comm. XII., App. iv, Vol. i, p. 107.

3. L. Estrange, No. 357. Camden Soc. (Old Series), Vol. v, p. 47.

4. Philip Stubbes. "A Chrystal Glasse" (1626), fol. A 3.

5. "Edward I." Works of Greene and Peele, ed. Dyce, p. 392.

6. In "Antonio and Mellida" II, i, 88. Works, ed. Bullen, i, p. 33.

"Paugh! [she spits,] servant,* rub out my rheum, it soils the presence.
... I'll spit in thy mouth, and thou wilt, to grace thee."

* i.e., lover, suitor.

more or less warranted by society habits. There was ample justification, too, for Chapman's picture of an intoxicated Court lady.¹ At the entertainment which James I. offered to the King of Denmark in 1606 several of the principal personages were too drunk to stand. A lady, representing the Queen of Sheba, carrying rich gifts to the royal guest, fell sprawling before him, and spilt her gifts in his lap. His Danish majesty himself, attempting to dance, fell down, and was carried off to bed, "not a little defiled with the presents of the Queen." The narrator of the story says that it reminded him "of what passed of this sort in our Queen's days," but, he adds, "I ne'er did see such lack of good order, discretion, and sobriety as I now have done."²

Undoubtedly manners declined at the Court of James I. Low revelry, foolery, and horseplay became common, not merely occasional. And following upon this, a decline in the literary taste of authors betrayed itself. Donne's writing, though full of genius, shows a reckless disregard of beauty and good taste. The later dramatists carry bad taste beyond the limits of decency.³

Lack of refinement marks much of the non-dramatic literature also; co-existing often with a finikin elaboration of style. No complaint of too great elegance can be made of such a letter as the following, published as a specimen of style by Nicholas Breton,—not, as a rule, to be numbered among coarse writers. It purports to be "A Letter of Scorne to a coy Dame."

"Mistress Fubs, if you were but a little fair, I see you would be mighty proude, and had you but the wit of a goose, you would surely hiss at the gander. . . . It is

1. "The Gentleman Usher," III., i.

2. Letter from Sir John Harington to Mr. Secretary Barlow, 1606. *Nugae Antiquae* ed., 1804, i, 348.

3. See Jonson's evidence.

"Playwright me reads, and still my verses damns.
He says I want the salt of epigrams;
I have no salt, no bawdry he doth mean,
For witty in his language, is obscene."

Works, ed. Gifford (1816), Vol. viii, p. 177.

not your holyday face, put on after the ill-favoured fashion, can make your half-nose but ugly in a true light. . . ."¹

Nash's controversy with Harvey affords examples of abuse as gross as it is witty. He compares Harvey's writing to a fit of vomiting; he constantly alludes to "lousiness" and other disgusting topics; and he riots in unseemly nonsense, picturing Harvey, for example, taming a flea, and carrying it about with him on a chain.² The terms of abuse hurled at detractors include "mongrel cur," "tyke," and "fool." Readers enjoyed the robustness of this writing. "That same vein of railing is become," says Chapman,

Now most applausive; your best poet is
He that rails grossest.³

In the popularity of such writing, the only merit of which consists in vigour and audacity, we detect the influence of another marked feature in the character of the typical Elizabethan. Much as he admired the marvellous and the beautiful, there was one quality for which his admiration was if possible even more intense. He fed his emotional nature upon a devouring love of the audacious, successful, and great,—a lure that never failed to blind him to all other qualities. The finest shape assumed by this sentiment was the spirit of patriotic pride,—the homage instinctively paid by Elizabethans to the manifestation of fearlessness and mastery in their ancestors and fellow-countrymen. Their own souls were kindled by successful resistance to the banded forces of Catholic Europe, and by the daring successes of English buccaneers. Their writings vaunted above

1. It should perhaps be stated that the title of the work is "A Post with a Mad Packet of Letters." Works, ii, p. 11.

2. "Confutation of Letter III. Works, ii, 231-3; also "Have with you to Saffron Walden," iii, 54.

3. "All Fools," II, i.

all things the manliness and fortitude of Englishmen. In Heywood's "Fair Maid of the West," the adventurous heroine, invited by the Emperor of Morocco to ask from him some great gift, disdainfully replies: "Our country breeds no beggars." Roused to admiration by the unshaken demeanour of the hero, in the power of his Spanish enemies, one of these exclaims:

These Englishmen,
Nothing can daunt them. Even in misery
They'll not regard their masters.¹

Even condemned criminals earned public admiration for their bearing in sight of death. Harrison boasts that they "do go cheerfully to their deaths, for our nation is free, stout, haughty, prodigall of life and blood . . . and therefore cannot in any wise digest to be used as villeins and slaves."² No characteristic is more constantly exhibited in drama than this of courage and audacity in danger; Vittoria Corombona, Iago, Britomart, Tamburlaine, the Roman Actor, and many more crowd at once into one's memory as examples of heroes and "glorious villains." The very laments of some writers prove the importance attached to physical courage and endurance. Harrison fears that Englishmen are losing their greatness through self-indulgence. "When our houses were builded of willow," he says, "then had we oaken men; but now that our houses are come to be made of oak, our men are not only become willow, but a great many (through Persian delicacy crept in among us) altogether of straw."³

Patriotic feeling naturally centred around Queen Elizabeth, and was expressed in enthusiastic admiration for this greatest of monarchs. The passage which

1. Act IV., Sc. i. Act. V., Sc. i. (The play was acted probably under Elizabeth, see V., i; certainly acted in 1617.)

2. "Description of England" (ed. 1587), Book II. New Shaks. Soc. (1877), pp. 221-2. Elizabethan dramatists stood in no need of inspiration from Seneca to assist them in painting stoicism.

3. *Ibid.* (ed. 1577), Part i, 237-8.

perhaps most adequately expresses the root of the national devotion, in admiration of her courage and success, is that in which John Lyly describes her in "Euphues."

"What hath this chast Virgin Elizabeth done, who by the space of twenty and odde yeares with continuall peace against all policies, with sundry myracles, contrary to all hope, hath governed that noble Island. Against whome neyther forren force, nor civill fraude, neyther discorde at home, nor conspiracies abroad, could prevaile. What greater merveile hath happened since the beginning of the world, then for a young and tender Maiden, to govern strong and valiant menne, then for a Virgin to make the whole worlde, if not to stand in awe of hir, yet to honour hir, yea and to live in spight of all those that spight hir, with hir sword in the sheath, with hir armour in the Tower, with hir souldiers in their gownes. . . ." ¹

In Spenser patriotic feeling shows itself in a genuine love of the fatherland, expressed in incomparably beautiful words:

Deare countrey, oh, how dearely deare
Ought thy remembrance and perpetuall band
Be to thy foster childe, that from thy hand
Did comun breath and nourriture receive.
How brutish is it not to understand
How much to her we owe, that all us gave,
That gave unto us all whatever goode we have.²

This grateful apostrophe is called forth by the memory of the majestic line of kings who have brought glory to this Isle.

Shakspeare's historical plays are well-known as offering many passages expressive of devoted love to

This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise;

1. Lyly. "Euphues." Arber's Reprint, p. 455.

2. "Faery Queene," II., Canto x.

This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
 This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings
 Fear'd by their breed, and famous for their birth,

This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land,
 Dear for her reputation through the world.¹

Less creditable is the exhibition of an insular contempt for other nations. Shakespeare must have realised that he was pandering to an unworthy feeling when he deliberately represented the French as bragging coxcombs, in *Henry V.*,—a travesty unworthy of the nation which should have felt itself too great to despise a foe.

Indeed, the spirit of contempt is not common; Elizabethans were generally ready to acknowledge greatness wherever found. One of the most striking passages in all Elizabethan literature is the following, in which Raleigh pays a magnanimous tribute of admiration to the daring of his life-long enemy the Spaniard.

“Here [in writing of a sea disaster of the Romans] I cannot forbear to commend the patient virtue of the Spaniards. We seldom or never find that any nation hath endured so many misadventures and miseries as the Spaniards have done in their Indian discoveries. Yet persisting in their enterprises with invincible constancy, they have annexed to their kingdom so many goodly provinces as bury the remembrances of all dangers passed. Tempests and shipwrecks, famine, overthrows, mutinies, heat, cold, pestilence, and all manner of diseases both old and new, together with extreme poverty, and want of all things needful, have been the enemies wherewith every one of their most noble discoveries, at one time or other, hath encountered. Many years have passed over some of their heads in the search of not so many leagues; yea, more than one or two have spent their labour, their wealth, and their lives, in search of a golden kingdom, without getting any further notice of it than what they had at their first setting forth. All

1. “Richard II.,” Act II., Sc. i.

which notwithstanding, the 3rd, 4th and 5th undertakers have not been disheartened. Surely they are worthily rewarded with their treasures and paradises which they enjoy and well they deserve to hold them quietly, if they hinder not the like virtue in others, which (perhaps) will not be founde."¹

Even the equable-minded Daniel could be set afire by the thought of enterprise calling for high courage.

The mounting venture for a high delight
Did make the honour of the fall the more,
For who gets wealth that puts not from the shore?
Danger hath honour, great designs their fame,
Glory doth follow, courage goes before.
And though th' event oft answers not the same,
Suffice that high attempts have never shame.
The mean observer (whom base safety keeps)
Lives without honour, dies without a name,
And in eternal darkness ever sleeps.²

Hence arose that interest in the past history of their beloved country, which called forth a flood of Chronicles and History Plays, long historical poems, topographical poems, and many somewhat weary historical passages in poems of more purely poetical interest. It is true that writers seem at times to have over-estimated the taste of the public for heavy historical diet; Daniel's Civil Wars did not quite suit popular reading as he had expected;³ and Drayton complained bitterly that whereas he had hoped that many would read his lengthy Polyolbion, because "it contained all the Delicacies, Delights, and Rarities of this renowned Isle," it had fallen out otherwise. It seems even to have promoted some reaction, for, he adds, "Some outlandish unnatural English" have even gone so far as to say that "there is nothing in this Island worth studying for," and they pride themselves

1. "History of the World" (1614), Book V., ch. i., §10.

2. "To Delia." Sonnet 35.

3. At any rate there were few editions of it, though he kept enlarging it.

in ignorance, with the result that the poem has not sold nearly as well as other "beastly and abominable trash (a shame both to our language and nation)." ¹

Had men, with all this enthusiasm, understood the true nature of greatness it would have been well with them. But even so deep a thinker as Bacon held that "a man may truly make a judgment that the principal point of greatness in any state is to have a race of military men."² The average Elizabethan constantly mistook for heroism, and paid his meed of admiration to mere violence, brutality, and riotousness. In literary expression, declamation and rant too often passed muster for true exaltation. To a people familiarised with violence and bloodshed, by the perils of street life and travel, and by the spectacle of public sanguinary whippings and executions, there was nothing revolting, but rather something boldly great, in the excesses shown at times upon the stage. The law against treason could, and did, afford them sights quite as horrible as that of Bajazet beating out his brains at the side of his cage,³ or Giovanni with the heart of his sister impaled upon his sword.⁴ The only wonder is that writers desirous of portraying unbridled ambition and power should have been so moderate and reticent in their representation of accompanying horrors. Only in one instance—the scene of the plucking out of Gloucester's eyes—did Shakspeare descend to picture revolting physical barbarity; for the most part he preferred to appeal to his audience by spectacles such as the Witches, Caliban, or the Fairies; though he never shrinks, it must be confessed, from wholesale bloodshed. Marston had no scruples as to providing on the stage bloody spectacles to rival those of real life. In "Antonio and Mellida," the hero tortures his helpless enemy by plucking out his tongue, exclaiming exultantly :

1. Introduction to Book II., before Song 19.

2. "Essays" (ed. S. H. Reynolds), xxix. "Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates," p. 204.

3. Marlowe. "Tamburlaine," V., ii.

4. Ford. "'Tis Pity She's a Whore," V., vi.

I have't, Pandulpho; the veins panting bleed,
Trickling fresh gore about my fist.

Then he displays to the agonising wretch a dish containing the limbs of his murdered child!¹

Horrible though they were, the barbaric penalties exacted by Elizabethan penal law were yet often treated as subjects for jest. Thomas Norton, who caused torture to be applied to a priest, Alexander Briant, boasted that he had "stretcht him on the rack a foot longer than God had made him."² And the somewhat prosaic Harrison has his joke upon the hanging of highwaymen. They commonly, he says, "get trussed up in a Tyburn tippet" before they come to middle age, "whereby it appeareth that some sort of youth will have his swing, though it be in a halter."³ Such an attitude is in accord with the habitual jocoseness with which the Elizabethan viewed madness.

Noise and clamour were the regular accompaniments of all form of entertainment. Though some writers object to the ill-manners and filth of play-houses, all assume noise to be quite in place. All the stage-manager had to do was to provide plenty of it. In Greene's "Alphonsus of Arragon" there are twenty-five separate directions for the sounding of drums and trumpets, besides some half-dozen marching entries of soldiery, of course accompanied by military music.

Plenty of fighting and rough violence was essential to a play. Hamlet derived a large part of its popularity from the "mad" scenes (real and feigned); Webster, Middleton and others inserted scenes of riotous madness to meet this taste.⁴ Thomas Heywood shows how completely he shares in the common error of mistaking noise and violence for "greatness." "To see," he says, "as I have seene, Hercules in his own shape hunting the boare,

1. Act V., Sc. ii.

2. See Dict. Nat. Biog.

3. "Description of England" (ed. 1587). New Shaks. Soc., p. 284.

4. See "The Duchess of Malfi," "The Changeling," and others.

knocking down the Bull . . . pashing the Lion, squeezing the Dragon, dragging Cerberus in chains . . . O, these were sights to make an Alexander . . . so bewitching a thing is lively and well spirited action . . ." ¹ Hamlet's objection to seeing "a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters," was not commonly held.

In language, in the same way, vigorousness of expression was demanded more constantly than elevation of thought. "They commend writers," says Jonson, "as they do fencers and wrestlers, who if they come in robustiously and put for it with a great deal of violence, are received for the braver fellows." ²

The representation of the comic was, especially during the earlier part of the period, marked by similar features of violence and crudity. Rough practical jokes, ridiculous gestures and buffoonery, coarsely plain-spoken allusions, formed the staple comic materials. The old morality comedy of the Vice belabouring the Devil, and the devil carrying off the Vice to hell on his back, was even as late as 1616 good enough for many of the audience and popular enough for Jonson to caricature in "The Devil is an Ass." ³ "Doctor Faustus" affords examples of this comedy of violence; Faustus boxing the ears of His Holiness the Pope, and snatching his food from his hands; Faustus ordering the horse-courser to pull at his leg, and laughing at the consternation with which he sees it come off in his hands! The Clowns—even such leading comic actors as Tarleton and Kemp,—provided comic gesture of the coarsest kind. Witness Joseph Hall's description of the tricks by which the

1. "Apology for Actors." See Somers Tracts (Series II.), Vol. i, p. 178.

2. "Discoveries." Works, ed. Gifford (1816), Vol. ix, pp. 174-5. See also Hall's "Virgidemiarum vi Libri," Book i., Satire vi.:

"If Jove speake English in a thundering cloud,
Thwick thwack, and riffe raffe, rores he out aloud.
Fie on the forged merit that did create
New coyne of words never articulate."

3. Dekker, in "News from Hell" (1606), admits, however, that it is "out of fashion to bring a Devil upon the stage." See Works, ed. Grosart, Vol. ii., p. 95.

audiences were entertained in the intervals between the acts of a tragedy.

Now, least such frightfull showes of fortunes fall
 And bloody tyrants rage, should chance appall
 The dead stroke audience, midst the silent rout,
 Comes leaping in a self-misformed lout,
 And laughs and grins, and frames his mimic face,
 And iustles straight into the princes place.
 Then doth the theatre echo all aloud
 With gladsome noise of that applauding crowd.
 A goodly hoch-poch, when vile *russettings*
 Are match with monarchs and with mightie kings:
 A goodly grace to sober *tragic muse*
 When each base clowne his clumbsie fist doth bruise,
 And show his teeth in double rotten row
 For laughter at his self-resembled show.¹

It was customary for the comic actors to dance jigs, to the accompaniment of comic songs, during the intervals; or they recited doggrel lines, making a "merri-ment" of some well-known personage. When Martin Marprelate was arousing the anger of the actors, they brought Divinity on the stage "with a scratcht-face, holding of her hart as if she were sicke."² Nash threatens the Usurer with being held up to public scorn, "in a merriment of the Usurer and the Devill."³ Jonson scoffed at the taste of the groundlings for seeing on the stage "tooth-drawers," "clever apes," "servant-monsters," and "jigs and dances."⁴ "If thou canst but draw thy mouth awry, lay thy leg over thy staffe, lap up drink on the earth . . . I warrant thee they'll laugh mightily,"⁵ says one in the "Pilgrimage to Parnassus." "Go to the Theatre and heare a Queenes Fice," says Will Summers the Clown, imitating the speech of a Welshman, "and he make hur laugh, and laugh hur bellyful."⁶

1. "Virgidemiarum vi Libri," Book I, Sat. iii.

2. Nash. "Pasquil's Returne." Works, i, 123

3. "Piers Penniles." Works, ii, 90.

4. "Bartholomew Fair." Induction.

5. "Pilgrimage to Parnassus," ed. Macray, pp. 22-3.

6. Nash. "Summer's Last Will and Testament." Works, vi, p. 101.

Even at the Court entertainments, if the evidence is to be believed, the opinion about an anti-masque was: "De more absurd it be, and vrom de purpose, it be ever all de better."¹ No wonder that a writer of genius should have reproached his audience, as "fitter spectators for the bears . . . or the puppets"² than for a well-thought-out play. The comic "business" was frequently left by the dramatist for the improvisation of the actors. When a playwright of genius chose to occupy himself with it, as in the case of Shakspeare, we see how a taste for rough, low comedy could be utilised for purposes of genuine art, as in *Caliban*.

Of course, the popularity of these exceedingly crude comic entertainments lay mainly amongst the "ground-lings." Writers at times expressly draw a contrast between their taste and that of the more cultivated part of the public. In the prologue to a play written for the (private) Blackfriars Theatre, but presented at the (popular) Globe Theatre, the author insolently apologises for not being able to meet the wishes of his unexpected clients from the lower ranks. "No shews, no dance . . . no target-fighting upon the stage . . . no bawdry, nor no ballads . . . no clown, no squibs, no devil in't. Oh now," he exclaims, "you squirrels that crack nuts, what will you do?"³ But as we have seen, the Court liked well enough the grotesque and ridiculous, and nothing is more certain than that the popularity of the comic actors Tarleton, Kemp, and Lanam, extended far beyond the lower classes. Tarleton, who was a famous jig-dancer, and at whom the people roared with laughter the moment he "peept out his head," was a great favourite with Queen Elizabeth. And Will Kemp, a member of the same company as Shakespeare, a jig-dancer, and a "merriment" maker, dedicated to a Court lady the account of his famous dance, for a wager, from London to

1. Jonson. "Masque of Augurs."

2. Jonson. "Magnetic Lady," II., i.

3. Shirley. "The Doubtful Heir." Prologue.

Norwich. Acting of this type—though it is not suggested that Kemp and his fellows were not also excellent comic actors in higher parts—is now for the most part abandoned by the theatres to the music-halls.

Jonson succeeded to some extent in weaning the better part of the audience from a taste for jigs and antics to the study of social types or “humours.” But unfortunately, as it turned out, his followers replaced the earlier coarse buffoonery by a more harmful, because superficially refined, licentiousness.

Thus it has been seen how closely, in spite of much contempt and hostility, Elizabethan writers were in touch with the general spirit of a public who little realised what faithful reflection of their habits, thoughts, and sentiments was being handed down to posterity. Full of the spirit which animated also statesmen, adventurers, merchant princes, and highwaymen, they persevered with heroism, in the teeth of discouragements and hindrances of every kind, in their self-appointed task of “representing nature.” Bold in conception, reckless, often tasteless in execution, their work is stamped with the striking inconsistencies of the age. Coarseness and finikin artificiality, lofty nobility and sordidness, ideal purity and debased sensuality, meet us at every turn as we read through the pages of these men, who were ever faithful in their aim, to “hold up the mirror to life.” Some, while responding to the motley ideals of their readers, idealised and ennobled them; others pandered to their grossest feelings; all gave to their generation that for which they asked.

APPENDIX.

SOCIAL POSITION OF AUTHORS.

The following is a tentative list of the chief authors of the period, drawn up roughly with regard to social position *by birth*.

N.B.—Those marked * published during their lifetime

Of aristocratic birth, with a position in Court circles.

Sir William Alexander;* (?) Barnabe Barnes;* Sir Henry Constable;* William Drummond;* Sir Edward Dyer; Sir Edward Fairfax;* (?) Abraham Fleming;* John Fletcher; Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke; Joseph Hall;* Sir John Harington;* George Herbert; Alexander Hume; Sir Walter Raleigh; Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst;* Sir Philip Sidney; Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford; Sir Henry Wotton. (17.)

Of the class of country gentlemen and members of the higher professions.

Richard Barnfield;* William Browne;* Ludovic Bryskett; Thomas Campion;* Sir John Davies;* Samuel Daniel;¹* Michael Drayton;²* Giles Fletcher;* John Florio;* John Ford;* George Gascoigne;* Barnabe Googe; Patrick Hannay;* John Marston;* Matthew Roydon (?); Thomas Nash;* Francis Quarles;* Robert Southwell; Edmond Spenser;* George Wither;* Bartholomew Young. (22.)

Of the rich citizen class.

Nicholas Breton; Christopher Brooke; John Donne; Gabriel Harvey; Thomas Lodge; Henry Lok; George Peele (?); Joshua Sylvester; Thomas Tusser.³ (9.)

Of humbler origin.

Antony Chute; Ben Jonson (?); Christopher Marlowe (?)⁴; John Taylor, the Water Poet; William Warner. (5.)

Of unknown origin.

William Barksted; William Bas(se); George Chapman; Thomas Churchyard; Thomas Dekker; John Dowland; Robert Greene; Clement Robinson; Thomas Watson. (9.)

1. Daniel's father was a musician; his brother held an office as court musician.

2. Drayton asserted that he was "nobly bred and well ally'd."

3. Tusser says, it is true, that he was of gentle birth.

4. Marlowe's father *may* have been well-to-do.

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- "Abuses Stript and Whipt," 49
 Addison, Joseph, 11
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